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Isaac N. Brown
June



A
C O U R S E
O F
PHYSICO-THEOLOGICAL
LECTURES
UPON THE
STATE OF THE WORLD,
FROM THE
CREATION TO THE DELUGE.

By ROBERT MILN, A. M.

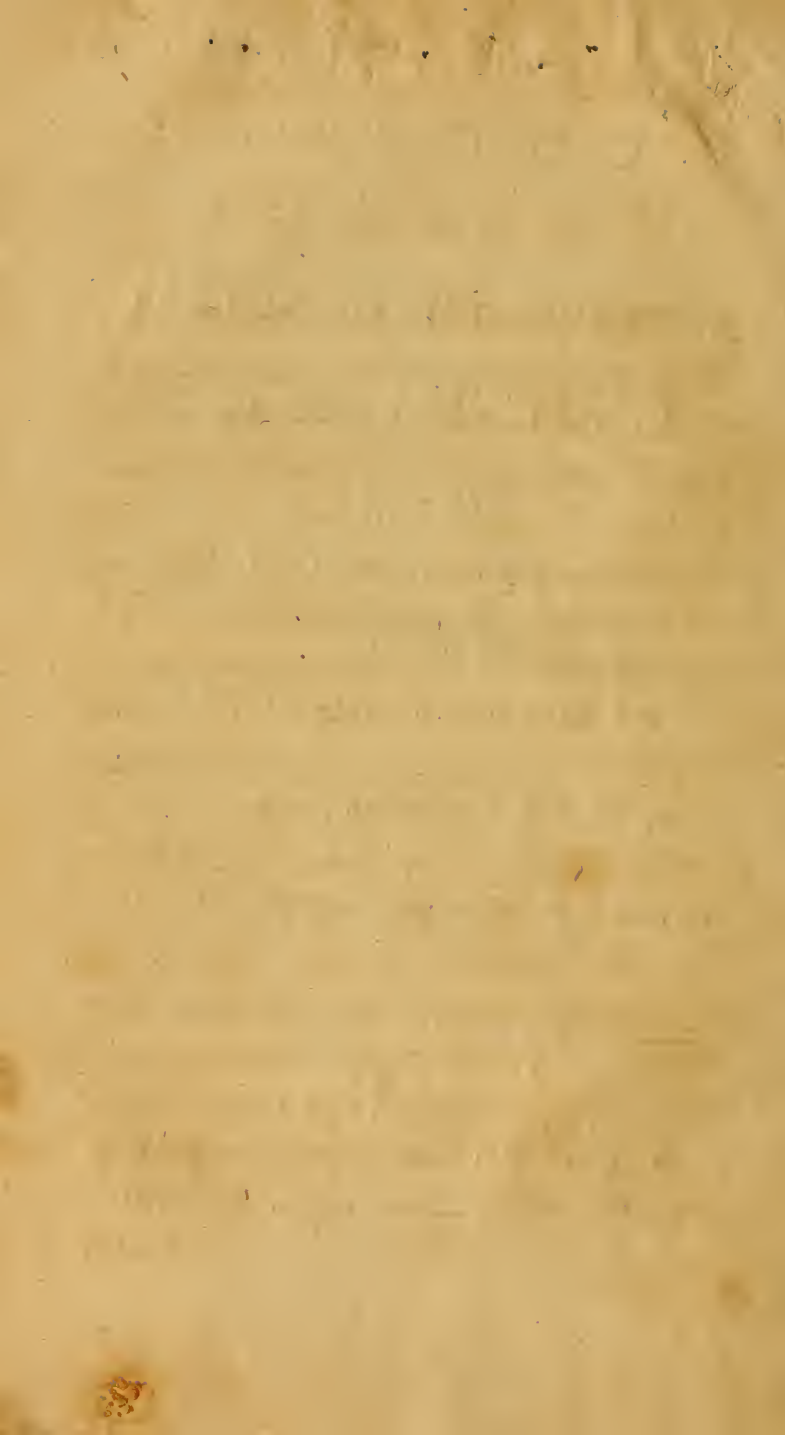
*The Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that
have pleasure therein. Ps. iii. 3.*

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MDCCLXXXVI,



P R E F A C E.

CONVINCED that reason and revelation mutually support each other, and that true philosophy is the best defence against scepticism and infidelity, I have ventured, on these principles, to contribute my mite to the support of sacred history. And whether I have thrown any new light on that part of it, which falls under my review, must be left to the judgment of the impartial reader; but I flatter myself, I have freed it from some visionary comments, which can neither be reconciled to the rectitude of the divine nature, nor to that uniformity of government, which is exercised over the natural and moral world.

It may be deemed presumption in me, to differ from opinions which
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claim the sanction of human authority, and long usage. My only apology is this. I not only find, that power and prescription have hitherto been the great support of error, and the most unwieldy obstacles to the progress of sound knowledge; but that genuine truth has ever disclaimed any alliance with such fallacious friends. Therefore I have implicitly followed the light of my own mind; tho' at the same time, I am so far from arrogating to myself any privilege, which I would not readily grant to others, that instead of censuring those who differ from me in sentiment, I rather commend them, for following the dictates of their own judgment, when they believe themselves better informed. In speculative and controvertible points, I have impartially laid before my readers the arguments of the different
oppos-

opponents, without taking upon me to affirm or decide upon the subject ; but where I think that useful truth and rational religion are concerned, I have openly stood forth to support the interests of both.

Some parts of my work will appear new to many of my readers ; particularly my theory of the *curse* upon the ground, and of the natural means employed by the Creator for the *destruction* of the old world. The first, whether true or false, is my own. The outlines of the second I owe to Mr. Whitehurst, but more especially to Mons. de Luc, Reader to our Queen. I might have reaped greater benefit from the writings of that ingenious philosopher and excellent divine, had not the greatest part of my work been printed off, before I had the pleasure of meeting with his *Lettres Physiques et Morales*.

I have

I have endeavoured as much as possible to adapt my discourses to the capacities of ordinary readers, and therefore have not introduced mathematical demonstrations, nor minute discussions on philosophical subjects. Neither have I interlarded my work with many vouchers from the heathen historians, in order to corroborate the authority of Moses ; because, in my opinion, it can answer no great purpose, to quote a mutilated copy, to those who have the original in their hands.

Were my publication thought worthy of a second edition, some parts of it might be corrected, and others more fully elucidated. And should it meet with a favourable reception, I intend (from materials already collected) to publish a second volume, including that period of sacred history, from the deluge, to the establishment of the twelve

twelve tribes in Canaan. During which period, we find many remarkable occurrences, such as, the confusion of languages at Babel ; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah ; the plagues of Egypt ; and the peregrinations of the Israelites thro' the wilderness.

In my present undertaking I have met with the countenance of a numerous and respectable list of subscribers, of different denominations, to whom I sincerely present my grateful acknowledgments. It is my greatest ambition, and it would be my greatest happiness, to have it in my power by any production of mine, to make them a more substantial return, by impressing their minds with just and worthy sentiments of Almighty God ; by exciting them to the study of revelation, and a due esteem for its sacred truths ; and convincing them

them that all the dispensations of providence to mankind, originated from divine benevolence, and will at last terminate in his glory, and the happiness of his rational creation.

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* * * The Author takes this opportunity of acquainting his Friends, that he has been favoured with a greater number of Subscribers than can be supplied with copies from his present edition, he therefore intends to publish a second; and with that view, will deliver out proposals as soon as convenience will permit.



LECTURE I.

J O B xxxviii. 4.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding.

THE Book of Job carries on the face of it, such striking marks of remote antiquity, that Jews and Christians in general, have looked upon it as the oldest composition in the world. As a proof that it was written before the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, we do not find in it, one allusion to any rite or ceremony of the Mosaic institution : neither does it mention any thing relating to the posterity of Jacob ; their sojourning in Egypt ; their passage through the Red Sea, or their peregrinations in the Wilderness ; tho' it frequently introduces singular and extraordinary acts of Divine providence. It's language is bold and nervous, and decorated with all the imagery of Eastern eloquence ; and it abounds with descriptions of the majesty and power of Almighty God, which are truly animated and sublime. This Book acquaints us with several memorable

transactions, not recorded by any other writer under the Old Testament. It tells us, that before the formation of this globe, there were stars in the firmament and angels in Heaven.* *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?* It speaks of the apostacy of angelic hosts.† *Behold he put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly.* And it gives us a record of something which God spoke to Adam, which is not to be met with elsewhere. *And unto man, or to Adam he said.† Behold the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.*

Who was the father of Job, and at what precise period of the world he flourished, we are nowhere told; but the name of the country where he dwelt, and the designations of his friends, bespeak him a descendent of Ishmael or Esau; and the length of his age, which was above two hundred years, is a proof that he lived in the days of the patriarchs, before the life of man was reduced to its shortest measure. Some draw an argument for Job's living in an early period, from the clear and perspicuous manner, in which he delivers the leading doctrines of that religion, which God was pleased to communicate to the

* Ch. xxviii. 4. 7. † Ch. iv. 18. ‡ Ch. xxviii. 28.

first of the human race, and which doubtless, like the religion of his own son, was, in process of time, corrupted by the doctrines and opinions of men. Thus, he describes death as a state of oblivion and rest; as * *his lying down in the dust, and not awaking till the Heavens be no more*: and he declares his hopes of a happy resurrection thro' a Redeemer, in clearer terms than any other writer, before life and immortality were brought to light. † *I know, says he, that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and tho' after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*

Some writers, affecting singularity of opinion, have adduced specious arguments, to prove that Job is a fictitious character, and that the whole of his history, is nothing but an allegorical description of the vexatious treatment, which the Jews received from their malevolent neighbours, after they returned from Babylon, and began to rebuild their city and temple ‡. But we have no less authority than that of God himself, to convince us that Job was a real man; for he ranks him with two other eminent personages, and says. § *Tho' Noah, Job, and Daniel were in that city, they should deliver but their own souls by their*

* Chap. xiv. 12. † Ch. xix. 25. ‡ Warburt. Div. Legat. § Ezek. xiv. 14.

righteousness, saith the Lord. And had not the Apostle James, believed him to have had a real existence, he never would have recommended him as a pattern to other men. * *Ye have heard,* says he, *of the patience of Job.*

There have been various opinions among learned men, about the writer of this book. Some have ascribed it to Elihu; some to Solomon, and others to the Men of Hezekiah. But it appears to me highly probable, that Job left behind him some memoirs of his own life written by himself; and that Moses meeting with these in the land of Midian, selected the most remarkable passages, and after digesting them into a book, embellished the whole with a poetic stile and scenical dress. He would look upon this history, as very applicable to the distressed condition of his own countrymen, and after returning into Egypt, would frequently read it to them, to console them under their afflictions, and give them the hopes of a happy deliverance from their thralldom.

But may it not be said, if Job at one time speaks of a resurrection in such a clear manner, why does he not more frequently introduce this doctrine, and dwell upon it with pleasure, as the best and surest consolation to good men, under all the

* Ja. v. ii.

miseries of human life? And if Moses was the writer of this book, why does he in his other writings, overlook a future state, and not make it the great sanction of those laws which he gave to the Israelites? But I would observe that a resurrection and future immortality are often mentioned by Job, tho' in phrases peculiar to the language and period in which that book was written*. And doubtless there were wise and sufficient reasons, why Moses did not insert the doctrine of a future state, into his system of legislation. Perhaps, the minds of his countrymen, being yet rude and untutored, were not able to look up to the invisible and spiritual objects of religion, so as to be awed to obedience by them: and a doctrine, which made them forego the concerns of this world for the rewards of another, was not suited to that œconomy, of which, under God, he was the minister and conductor. But tho' the law of Moses was fenced with temporal promises and threatenings alone, and as an apostle remarks, was † *added because of transgressions*, yet this could never preclude the Israelites, from any of those blessings, which were to be accomplished by the seed of the woman, and which were included in that covenant, made with their father Abraham.

* See Peter's Crit. Desert. on Job. † Gal. iii. 19.

Several reasons may be assigned, which make it very probable, that Moses during his exile, which lasted forty years, not only wrote the history of Job, but likewise the book of Genesis.

We are told that Jethro, priest of Midian, gave him his daughter in marriage, and likewise appointed him keeper of his herds and flocks*. This would make his circumstances in life, easy and comfortable. And, as the nature of his employment afforded him time and leisure, we may take for granted, that a man already *learned in all the wisdom of Egypt*, would not slacken his pursuit after knowledge, but would prosecute such studies as suited his genius and inclination. The works which he left behind him, indicate the superiority of his talents for historical composition. When we reflect then, upon his ardent and inflexible love to his countrymen, which proved the occasion of his banishment, need we wonder to find him employed, in writing the history of his ancestors, and tracing them up to their very origin. His situation in Midian, might afford him materials for a work of this kind, which he could not so readily procure elsewhere. The people among whom he lived, were the descendents of Abraham, on whom his Maker bestowed this encomium. † *I know him, that he will command his children,*

* Exod. iii. 1.

† Gen. xviii. 19.

and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. Now, tho' Midian the father of the Midianites, was the son of Abraham by his wife Keturah, yet, we have no reason to suppose that he would not have as religious an education as Isaac the son of Sarah, and heir of the promise. Besides, it appears from history, that the other branches of Abraham's family, were for many generations a flourishing people, (and at this time one of them was priest and probably prince of Midian) while the posterity of Jacob were reduced to a cruel and ignominious bondage in the land of Egypt. Such an abject state for a long period of years, would naturally depress their minds; render them insensible of any liberal accomplishment; and wean their attention from every other circumstance, but how to earn their bread, and avoid the frowns of their unfeeling task-masters. Thus, it is not to be supposed, that Moses could collect among his own countrymen many useful memoirs of antient times. But living with his father in law, who afterwards gave a specimen of his great sagacity and judgment*, and who being a priest must have had beside him all the stock of knowledge to be found in that part of the world, he would derive great assistance from him,

* See Jethro's advice to Moses, Exod. xviii. 17.

in compiling a work, perhaps equally agreeable to both.

But now, a strong objection occurs, viz. supposing Moses capable of writing part of the book of Genesis, yet how could he write the history of the Creation, before there was a man to see this work, and transmit an account of it to posterity? Does not the Almighty in the very text challenge the whole of the human race to tell the time when, or the manner how, this stupenduous work was executed, when he says, *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding.* I readily allow, that no man could ever have attained to the knowledge of this, but by a particular revelation from Heaven. But, that such a revelation was made to Adam will appear probable from the following considerations.

We must affirm, that man at first was either created with intuitive knowledge, like the angels of God, (tho' this is incompatible with humanity) or that his Maker taught him what was necessary for his welfare and subsistence. He had as yet no experience of the nature and qualities of herbs or fruit of any kind, nor how any of these suited his constitution, so that it was impossible for him to distinguish betwixt salutary food and deadly poison. But, that man the image of his Maker, and superior of this lower world, should be left
by

by his Creator in such a destitute condition, as to have his existence indangered every moment of his life, is not only unworthy of, but repugnant to the character of that Being, ** who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works.* But Moses confirms the suggestions of reason; and withal, gives a convincing proof of his veracity, when he describes in such a natural manner, how the Almighty treated our first parents, upon his sending them into life. He tells us, that when God made them a grant of every tree in paradise for food, he prohibited them under the most awful sanction, from tasting the fruit of the *tree of knowledge*, because it would not only be prejudicial to their health, but even fatal to their lives. When we find, then, that the gracious parent of all, shewed such tender concern for the bodies of his frail offspring, can we suppose that he would withhold from them, the knowledge of such truths, as might improve their minds in piety and virtue, and conduce to their present and future happiness? But nothing could so effectually contribute to this end, and give them such deep and lasting impressions of the wisdom, power, and unity of the true God, as making them acquainted with the way and

* Ps. cxlv. 9.

manner in which they and every other creature were brought into life and being. None, I presume, will deny, that God could reveal such facts to man, and there is the highest probability that he did reveal them. Taking it then for granted, that such a revelation was made to the first of the human race, I shall endeavour to prove, that the history of it, might have been handed down from Adam to Moses, free from fabulous and legendary additions, with which every dispensation of religion has hitherto been corrupted.

The all-wise Creator hath implanted in human nature certain principles, which excite in all men a curiosity to be informed concerning the affairs of others, and a propensity to communicate the knowledge of their own. Were we not so constituted, we should know nothing, but what falls within the reach of our senses, and in this respect differ but little from the groveling creation: but led by this universal instinct, men have invented various methods, of communicating to their contemporaries, and transmitting to posterity, the knowledge of such facts as was likely to contribute to their pleasure and profit. The first, and for a considerable time the only mode of conveyance, was oral tradition; which, between the creation and deluge must have been more certain, and less liable to be corrupted than afterwards

wards, on account of the longevity, or great length of life at which men arrived during that period. One man, viz. Methulesah conversed with Adam and with Noah, and this included a space of time, not less than sixteen hundred and fifty-six years. After the flood, the life of man was curtailed, but not to such a degree, as to prevent tradition passing thro' very few hands from Noah to Moses. Shem, the son of that patriarch, lived a considerable time after the birth of Abraham; who was, during fifteen years, cotemporary with his grandson Jacob. Jacob's son Levi, was grandfather to Amram the father of Moses; and these three might have conversed together. Thus it appears, that no more than seven persons were necessary, to deliver the history of the creation and fall from Adam to Moses.

In every country, where there is little intercourse among men, and where the objects of their knowledge and attention are but few, tradition is better preserved than elsewhere. And this was the case with the inhabitants of the early world. For a considerable time after the creation, they had little to think of, or talk about, but the transactions of their father Adam, and those extraordinary communications of light and knowledge which his Maker imparted to him. Every sabbath when they met together for solemn and

social worship; every sacrifice which they offered; and every act of religion which they performed, would bring to their remembrance, the grounds and reasons of these solemnities; in so much that tradition and religion would be intimately connected together, and mutually support each other. We may likewise observe, that if their mental powers, bore any proportion to the size and strength of their bodies, their memories would be clear and strong, and what they had once learned they would not easily forget.

Tradition must have been preserved with the greatest fidelity, during the life of Adam, which was nine hundred and thirty years; because his children, whenever they were at a loss for information, might always have recourse to him, as a venerable and authentic record. And if it be true (as many learned men believe) that the antient patriarchs and heads of families descended from Seth, were endowed with a prophetic spirit, their piety and natural affection would prompt them to disseminate among the tribes over which they presided, the religion and history of their forefathers; and they would cautiously guard against every innovation, by which their wicked and profligate neighbours, might endeavour to pervert or deprave either the one or the other.

Tradition would also be rendered more permanent, and be more easily handed down to posterity from its early and usual dress; I mean that of poetry and music. The power of music is felt among the rudest and most barbarous nations of the world; and the few records which they have, are only to be met with in their historical songs. Moses has preserved one of these, which was sung by the Canaanites, on the victory of King Sihon over the Children of Moab*, and perhaps it is the oldest song extant. He himself composed many such on particular occasions, and enjoined the Israelites to get them by heart, and rehearse them. The repeating of heroic and martial songs was so suited to the taste of former times, that it became an honourable and profitable employment; and an order of men, selected for the excellency of their memory and voice, were retained by those of the highest rank, to compose odes or songs, to soothe their pride and flatter their vanity†. They sung these to the harp and other musical instruments at their festivals and public assemblies‡. We are informed, that there were some employed in the Temple worship, said to be *cunning in the songs of the Lord*§. It was usual also at the funeral

* Numb. xxi. 27. † Called in this island Bards or Minstrels. ‡ See Introduction to the Relics of Ancient Poetry. § 1 Chron. xxv. 7.

processions of the great, to retain a number of women, as having more plaintive voices, to sing mournful dirges; who, by wailing and lamentation, excited grief on the one hand, and on the other, by their compositions, offered incense to the memory of the departed hero. This was an antient custom, and is mentioned by Job*. And the Prophet Jeremiah, foreseeing the great slaughter which would be made among his countrymen, desires them to prepare the *mourning women*†.

But men finding that facts built on memory alone, were like streams of water, apt to be tinctured with the different soils thro' which they passed, would soon find out other expedients to assist and relieve their memories. The first and simplest of these, as appears from sacred history, were pillars; altars; groves; great heaps of stones; giving names to places descriptive of the events which happened in them; and instituting solemn assemblies, at each of which the occasion of the institution would be recited. But all these would be so far imperfect, that no facts could be learned from them, without information about their origin and intention. Therefore men would endeavour to improve their former inventions, and think of some mode of conveying historical

* Job iii. 8.

† Jer. ix. 17.

knowledge which required no explanation. This could only be done by marks or colours. But however rude and simple the first attempt to delineate facts might be, it gave rise to a most valuable art, I mean that of writing, which under the providence of God, has proved the chief means of introducing into the world, religion, science, and civilization.

It is generally agreed, that the first mode of writing, taking that word in its utmost extent, was painting, or designing material objects with colours*. This practice is still kept up, by the greatest part of uncivilized nations: which shews us, that nature speaks with a uniform voice to the gross capacities of men†. In process of time, the art of picture writing would be rendered more expressive, by the addition of marks or signs. When the meaning of these were known and established by common consent, this would form a symbolical language, such as we use, when we converse with dumb persons. Symbols or hieroglyphics were long retained in writing, after an alphabet was known, especially by the priests of Egypt, to throw a veil over their doctrines, and

* Goguet's Origin, &c.

† When the Spaniards first arrived in Mexico, the inhabitants of the sea coasts, apprized their Emperor Montezuma of their landing, by sending him a large cloth, on which they had depicted every thing which they had seen.

give them a mysterious air. The prophets under the Old, and some of the apostles under the New Testament have adopted this stile ; for which reason, none can understand their writings, without first learning to know the meaning of their different signs and symbols.

The art of writing, never arrived at any degree of perfection, till an alphabet, and the use of letters were invented. At what period of the world this happened, or who was the man to whom society is so much indebted for the invention, remains, and probably will for ever remain, a secret. But to delineate not only material objects, but even thoughts, words, and actions, so as to make them visible to the eye, is a wonderful art indeed ; in so much, that many learned men, have not hesitated to pronounce it above all human capacity ; and therefore have ascribed its origin to a particular revelation from God. Some think that this art was suggested to Moses, when he was in exile, to divert his attention from those melancholy reflections, which, it is natural to suppose he felt, on account of his long absence from his relations and countrymen. Others have endeavoured to prove with very plausible arguments, that Moses was taught the knowledge of letters by God, when he was with him forty days on
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Mount Sinai, and there received the two tables of stone*.

The first materials men made use of, on which to delineate their characters, were rocks, pillars, bricks, and such like. Afterwards they introduced things of a portable nature, such as thin plates of lead, brass, ivory, and wood smeared over with wax. To these succeeded the skins of sheep and goats prepared for the purpose; then the inner bark of trees, and the leaves of a rust called papyrus. At last the best and most convenient of all materials was found out, I mean paper, such as is now commonly made use of. The instruments employed for writing, have likewise undergone many changes, from the pencil and the engraving iron to the feather of a bird.

Thus I have endeavoured to trace the various methods, by which the knowledge of facts, might, in the early world, have been handed down thro' a series of many ages; with a view to shew the possibility of Moses being able to write the oldest part of his history, without his receiving any supernatural revelation from God. Yet I am far, from even insinuating that this was the case. On the contrary, when we attentively peruse his writings, nothing but prejudice can prevent us

* See Winder's Hist. of Knowl. Vol. II.

from finding in them, the clearest and most convincing proofs of Divine inspiration, qualifying him to act, not only in the capacity of a law-giver, but likewise of an historian. The superiority of Moses over every other writer of antiquity, may be evinced from the following arguments.

1. The oldest and most celebrated writers among the heathens, have acknowledged, that there was a time prior to the commencement of history; when all was involved in obscurity and darkness; and they allow, that their first and earliest relations of things, were borrowed from vague traditions, and unauthenticated records. But the history of Moses is coeval with time itself. His account of the formation of this globe, and of every thing therein, is apparently as clear and distinct, as that of the deluge, or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, when there were men to behold, and record these events. He is never at a loss for information. His narrations are as perspicuous, as if he had been actually present at every transaction which he relates. He quotes no human authority, but delivers his sentiments, like a man conscious to himself, that what he spoke was true.

2. There is a greater harmony and consistency in the works of Moses, than in any other ancient

tient writer. Tho' the subjects on which he treats are various, and many of the characters which he introduces are singular and uncommon, yet the whole of his history, appears like one uniform detail of facts, not one of which is contradictory to, or incompatible with another. And throughout the whole, he never loses sight of his great and leading object, viz. the display of the power and wisdom of the great Creator; the danger of transgressing his laws, and the happy consequences of yielding obedience to his authority.

3. Moses is not more distinguished from other historians, by the subjects on which he treats, than by his manner of handling them; I mean that accuracy and precision for which he stands unrivaled. Tho' his writings are universally allowed to be the oldest in the world, yet his first essays approach towards perfection, and serve as a pattern of correct and judicious composition. Who but Moses could have written the history of two thousand years in a few short chapters, and made it one uninterrupted series of successive events? With what art has he interwoven the chronology of the world, into the lives of the patriarchs, and apparently without any design? I may likewise observe that the simplicity of his style, joined with true sublimity and grandeur,

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has often been remarked and well illustrated, by the best and most judicious critics.

4. Had the history of Moses been false, it might easily have been refuted, at the time when he published it; because the traditions concerning the creation, the fall, and the state of the antediluvian world, would be still fresh in the memories of men. And, considering the prejudices of the Egyptians, and many of their neighbours against the Israelites, nothing could have more effectually gratified their resentment, than to have had it in their power to depreciate the character of their law-giver, by proving him an impostor. Yet nothing of this kind appears; nay, on the contrary, his name, his wisdom and learning are celebrated by many of the oldest, and best historians of the East; and tho' they have often mutilated his history, and obscured it with their own fables and inventions, yet it is evident that they have all borrowed from him; and the more of his sentiments they have retained, the more probable do their theories appear.

5. A strong and cogent argument in behalf of Moses's veracity, may be drawn from the view which he gives us, of the natural and moral government of God, as strictly coinciding, and mutually supporting each other. He describes this globe as prepared with infinite wisdom and
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art for the reception of its inhabitants, and them as fit for their station and abode upon it. Does man live agreeable to the laws of his condition, and follow the dictates of his Maker? The earth smiles upon him, and spontaneously contributes to his support and delight. Does he violate the commands of his heavenly guide, and lean to his own understanding? Then the earth withholds its bounteous productions, and instead of these, sends him up briars and thorns. Does a general corruption of manners call for a general judgment? Then, all nature stands prepared to execute the pleasure of her Sovereign Lord. The very elements, from being dispensers of his goodness, are then converted into the messengers of his wrath.

6. The records of nature bear ample testimony to the truth of sacred history, and her regular and uniform laws confirm its veracity. The wisest and most inquisitive of the human race, and the most capable to pronounce upon the subject, have declared, that all the theories, which infidelity and scepticism have fabricated to weaken the authority of Moses, will scarcely admit of a serious review; while at the same time they prove, that in proportion as the writings of this great man are understood, they acquire the additional evidence of reason, experience, and observation.

7. And

7. And lastly, what gave a sanction to the veracity of Moses, above all historians in the heathen world, was, the miracles which he performed in the presence of the whole tribes of Israel, during the space of forty years. For we may hold it as a maxim*, that when a man can control the laws of nature, and exert a power above that which is human, he must be *sent of God*; who can never bear testimony to any one as a divine messenger, whom he has not sent, or who publishes his own inventions as the oracles of Heaven. Therefore, whatever Moses might have formerly written, yet as he delivered to his countrymen the Book of Genesis among his other works, when he was under an abiding inspiration from Heaven, we must conclude, that his history of the creation, of the fall, and antediluvian world, is fully confirmed by Divine authority: and as such, it has, ever since its publication, been held sacred by the church of God.

The works of Moses had peculiar advantages for being preserved pure and incorrupted. They were not only written and published, in the presence of the Israelites, but public officers were appointed to keep and watch over them with religious care*, whose aversion to the doctrines and writings of neighbouring nations, would pre-

* See Farmer on Miracles.

vent them from blending the opinions of others with their own. The Books of Moses were lodged in the sacred recess of the Tabernacle, and afterwards in the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple. Every king at his coronation, was obliged to transcribe a copy of them from the original, and every individual to get a part of them by heart. They were read at stated times; and every person who excelled in the knowledge of them, was held in the highest estimation. In short, these writings were, and still continue to be to the posterity of Jacob, their *magna charta* and statute book, as containing the whole of their rules, for the administration of justice, and for every part of their worship. Every privilege, whether of a civil or religious nature, wherewith their temporal and spiritual Sovereign, honoured them above the rest of mankind, were only to be found in these venerable records.

* Revelation examined with Candour.

LECTURE II.

GENESIS I. I.

In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.

THE Book of Genesis is placed first in the sacred canon, because its contents are first in order of time, and first in dignity and importance; as being the basis of all those revelations, which are the constituent parts of the christian system. But, before I enter upon the illustration of that part of the book which comes within the limits of my proposed plan, it may not be amiss to premise the following remarks.

I. The great aim of Moses in all his writings, was to guard the Israelites against idolatry, and gradually to wean them, from those superstitious principles and practices, to which they had contracted an attachment, while sojourning in the land of Egypt. For which reason he begins his writings by exhibiting to them a striking display of the character and perfections of the one true God, as the sole creator, and supreme governor
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of the world, and of every being therein. At the same time, he shews them what they had to dread from trampling upon his authority, and violating his laws. And to excite them to gratitude and obedience, he acquaints them with a gracious promise, which God made to their first parents thro' the seed of the woman. Which promise being afterwards renewed and ratified to Noah, and to Abraham, their ancestors, gave them assured hopes, that every blessing contained in it, would be accomplished in God's own time.

2. We are not to suppose that Moses repeats the very words, which were spoken by every character which he had occasion to introduce. It is enough, when a revelation is published to the world, that its substance be preserved entire, and that the truths which it contains, be unadulterated and genuine; tho' the publisher may use a stile, which, he thinks will best answer the end for which it was given. Doubtless, therefore, Moses delivered his sentiments, in a stile and manner, adapted to the capacities of his countrymen.

3. We never find the sacred historian introducing reason and argument to support the doctrines which he lays down. He uses a more efficacious method of delivering them: a method suitable to the capacities of all men. He establishes the whole upon facts; in my opinion, the best

and surest method of communicating knowledge both natural and moral. How feeble are our convictions of the being of a God, from all the arguments which ingenuity has invented, compared with the investigation of his own works? Here, our senses come in to the aid of our reason; and then we both see and feel the brightest traces of his wisdom, power, and goodness.

4. When Moses wrote the history of the creation, it was not his intention, to enter into a minute and philosophical discussion of that subject. The account which he gives us is purely historical, and calculated to raise in our minds such affecting ideas of this stupendous work, as might best promote the purposes of piety and religion. If his history be true as far as it goes, this is sufficient to remove every cavil. It shall be my business in the following work, to establish its authority, from the invariable laws of nature, and the different phenomena, which this globe presents to our observation.

That the earth is not eternal, nor arose from chance, appears a self-evident truth, when we consider both the nature, and the regularity of those materials of which it is composed. The harmony of its parts, and the apparent unity of its design, bespeak it the workmanship of one being. Therefore Moses introduces his history, by laying it
down

down as a maxim, That *in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*, i. e. the whole universe, and every thing which it contains. *The beginning* alludes to time; for time and existence are coeval. We have no measure of time, but the duration of this world; what is prior to that, is to us eternal. Hence the phrase, *in the beginning*, means as far back as our ideas can reach. To *create*, is to give being to that which had none before. It is impossible for a thing to be, and not to be at the same time; but that a thing should exist now that did not exist before, is no more a contradiction, than that a man should move his arm after its having been in a state of rest.

Tho' Moses says, that *in the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*, yet his words do not imply, that they were all created at one and the same time. In this vast universe, there are many bodies which differ in magnitude and splendor, and probably they differ as much, in respect of time and duration. It fills our minds with ideas worthy of the great Creator, when we reflect that he has ever been enlarging the sphere of his providence and government, and is still exerting his power and wisdom, by forming in the bosom of boundless space, new worlds of different kinds, and subject to different laws.

The first description which Moses gives us of this globe, is, That it was *without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep*, i. e. It was a confused, turbid mass, without regularity and order, and uninhabited by any living creature. This is what the heathens called a chaos; and one of their * poets thus describes it.

“ One was the face of nature, if a face,
 “ Rather a rude and indigested mass,
 “ A lifeless lump unfashion’d and unfram’d,
 “ Of jarring seeds, and justly chaos nam’d”

How long the earth continued in this state we are not told, but some think that it had undergone many changes before this period, and thus account for several phenomena that are still found in it. We know that since it was reduced to its present form, it has been deluged by water, and revelation informs us, that it is to be destroyed by fire; when it will once more be *without form, and void*, till the great Creator model it again, and create *a new Heaven and a new Earth*. The word *create* is frequently used by the sacred writers, as implying no more, than moulding, fashioning, or forming a thing out of materials already prepared†.

* Ovid. Metamor.
 Jer. xxxi. 22.

† Ezek. xxviii. 13. Ps. li. 10.

The first act of creation which the historian mentions, as preparatory to the whole of the subsequent work, is thus expressed, *The spirit of God moved on the face of the waters*. It is thought by some, that the word *moved* alludes to the quivering motion of a hen, when she expandeth her wings over her tender brood. There are a variety of opinions about the meaning of the *spirit of God* in this place. Some think that a mighty wind (in which sense the word spirit is sometimes used) at this time put the whole mass in motion*. But it is not probable that there was any wind, before there were air or clouds to produce it. By the word *spirit* in scripture language is generally meant, any active, hidden principle, or secret and efficacious cause; and when applied to God, it means the influence and exertions of his power, both in the natural and moral world. Therefore in my opinion, there is nothing more intended here, than that the Almighty, now beginning to exert his active power, impressed upon the chaos what we commonly term the laws of nature, or in other words, those rules which establish a regular and uniform connection between secondary causes and effects, in the system to which we belong, and which can only be ascertained by experience and observation. This would gradually

* Clayton's Vindic. Let. 4.

digest and prepare the whole, for that beautiful form and order, to which it was afterwards reduced. God is not like man, under the necessity of using a variety of instruments, and often changing them, when constructing or repairing the same machine; therefore we may conclude, that 'by whatever mode the operations of nature are daily carried on, by the same mode, the chaotic mass was formed into a habitable world.'

These expressions, *the face of the deep*, and *the face of the waters*, seem to indicate, that the whole mass of the earth was at this time of a soft and liquid nature; a circumstance, which enables us to account for the present figure of the globe, not being a perfect sphere, but what we call a spheroid*, similar to an orange, depressed at the poles, and having its axis shortened. The diurnal motion of the earth would no sooner take place, than its middle or equatorial parts, would begin

* This was the opinion of that great man, Sir Isaac Newton, and has since been confirmed by different experiments, especially by measuring a degree of latitude in each hemisphere, at the desire of the Kings of France and Spain. By which it appears, that the equatorial diameter of the globe, exceeds that of the polar about thirty-seven miles. It is agreeable to one of the laws of nature, that all bodies, which revolve upon their axis, acquire a centrifugal force, in proportion to their velocities, and which velocities and forces are in proportion to their distance from the axis.

to swell and expand, to a considerable degree*.

Then, Moses proceeds to the different acts of creation, and describes them as gradually rising in the scale, and succeeding one another in a natural order, according to the operation of those laws, by which the supreme Being was to regulate and sustain the future world. But here I would remark, that the historian, in order to accommodate himself to our capacities, introduces the Almighty speaking after the manner of men, in every exertion of creative power; but in such an authoritative way, that his word alone calls into being, things which had no former existence. This is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist†, when he says, *By the word of the Lord were the Heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast.*

Light was the first agent, according to Moses, which God employed in his work of creation. *Let there be light, and there was light.* Light is not only the first and noblest creature in the inani-

* This may be proved by an experiment. Let any thing of a globular form, and which is soft and pliable, be whirled with great velocity round its axis, and it will appear more elevated at the middle, than at its poles.

† Ps. xxxiii. 6. 9.

mated world, but it is spoke of, as an inseparable attendant upon the Deity. * *He is light, and † dwelleth in light.* It is not an easy matter to fix the meaning of the word in this place. They who look upon the sun to be the sole fountain of light to the planetary system, think that this luminary even then, in some degree enlightened the unfashioned earth.

‡ Other men of eminence in the learned world maintain, that light is totally independent of the sun, and is a substance by itself, as distinct from all other, as the air is from the water. They conceive it to be, not that sensation which we feel in ourselves, on the presence of a luminous body, but to us an infinitely subtile matter, which paints upon the eye those objects, from whose surfaces it is reflected, and pervades all nature by night as well as by day. They compare it to the ringing of a bell, which produces sound, not by any emanation of particles from its own body, but by exciting the air or sounding substance, without which the motion of the bell would have no effect. There is indeed a great difference betwixt the velocity of sound, and of light; the latter being

* 1 John i. 5.

† 1 Tim. vi. 16.

‡ Nature Displayed. Art. Light. The great Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, had adopted this theory, before he had seen it so fully illustrated by the ingenious Abbe la Pluche. See his Scrip. Divinity. Chap. 4.

inconceivably greater than the former. Light according to the best calculations, reaches our earth from the sun in about seven or eight minutes,, whereas it would require seventeen years and a half for sound to pass thro' the same distance * of space. Light is either a luminous body of itself, or it issues out, and proceeds from some other body. That the latter should be the case, appears improbable from this experiment. Suppose a bright and burning flame of one inch diameter, be placed upon an eminence, it will send its light around it for the space of three miles, which makes one hundred and thirteen cubical miles. Now, that this small body, should incessantly emit such a prodigious quantity of particles, as to fill this space, appears incredible, even upon the supposition of the infinite divisibility of matter. Whereas it is more natural to suppose, that objects become visible, by those particles of light, which intervene betwixt our eyes and any object, being properly excited and put in motion. Therefore according to this hypothesis, light might have been created, before there was a sun to excite it, or a moon to reflect it.

Others, by light understand its concomitant, viz. fire or phlogiston, and think that when God

* The sun is computed to be eighty-two millions of miles distant from the earth.

said, *let there be light*, it was only a command that the fiery and luminous particles should be disintangled from all the other parts of the mass, and begin now to exert their active force. Fire is the only pure element with which we are acquainted, and probably the basis of all the rest. It is the principal ingredient of all bodies whatever, and is diffused thro' all the parts and particles of the material world. On the different quantity and combination of fire, which enter into the composition of any body, depends its gravity, its figure and form, its qualities and colours, and in short, every thing which distinguishes one body from another. So that this element is employed by the author of nature, as the chief, if not the sole instrument, by which he upholds, diversifies, and adorns the whole of this lower world. We remain entire strangers to the nature of fire, but we are sensible of its effects: for we feel, we see, and hear it in the Heavens above, and in the earth below. And, happy it is for mankind, that he who made it, has distributed it in due quantities and proportions throughout the great fabric, and said unto it as he did to the sea, * *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further*. Fire remains in an inactive state, till it is once excited; which may be done by different means; by fermenta-

* Job xxxviii. 11.

tion,

tion, by motion and friction. Now, if the Almighty Creator disengaged and set at liberty the different particles of fire, throughout the huge mass, we can comprehend many of the consequences which would naturally ensue. First of all; the heat would occasion a violent fermentation, and intestine commotion of all its parts. Upon which, by the laws of gravitation and attraction, the denser particles would subside according to their specific gravities, and arrange themselves about a common center; and by the law of cohesion, similar bodies would unite and cling together according to their different tendencies; and form regular and uniform strata from the center to the surface; each occupying its place, according to the density of its parts. The mass would then assume the figure of a sphere or globe; and water being the lightest of all terrestrial matter, would be equally spread over the whole face of it; which coincides with Moses's account; who also says, *God saw the light that it was good*: Every creature of God is good, both in a physical and in a moral sense, when it answers the end for which it was brought into being. *And God divided the light from the darkness*. They who affirm that the sun was not yet created, are under the necessity of saying, that God by a supernatural act of power enlightened only one hemi-

sphere. For, had light been scattered around the whole globe, the first three days would have been but one; and a revolution of the earth, could not possibly have divided the darkness from the light. *And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.* I must here, once for all, mention a remark which will often occur, when we peruse the writings of Moses. God is said to do many things, which only come to pass, in the ordinary course of his providence. And an event is often connected with that which gave rise to it, as if both were coincident, while the event is only subsequent, and takes place sometime after. Thus, light and darkness could not be called day and night, till there were men in the world to make the distinction, and give this name to each. *And the evening and the morning were the first day.* Doubtless, the commencement of the first day succeeded a long and dismal night; but, as the Jews and many other nations, reckoned the beginning of the day from the evening, therefore Moses mentions it first; and as the evening and morning were the principal parts of the day, he speaks of these as comprehending the whole.

On the SECOND DAY, *God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.* We have already observed, that a fermentation throughout the

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the mass would no sooner take place, than the heavier bodies would begin to subside; and at the same time, by the laws of statics, the lighter and more tenuous would ascend. Now, the air being eight hundred times lighter than water, would rise to a great height above that element. And fire being a lighter body still, and at this time issuing out from all parts of the earth, would mount up into the higher regions, and carry along with it an immense quantity of vapours; so that the space for a great way around the terraqueous globe, would remain for some time, no better than a turbid and muddy chaos. When the temperature of the air began to change from violent heat, to different degrees of cold, the grosser and more terrene particles would unite, and gradually descending to the earth, increase its magnitude. At last, the firmament or atmosphere would come to such a state, as to be fit for suspending the clouds; and that part of it next the earth, would divide the watery vapours above, from the waters of the seas and rivers below.

Some may wonder, why making the air, should be the work of one whole day, especially as this seems to be no more than the effect of natural causes. But such should consider, that the firmament and clouds, are objects of great magnitude in holy writing. In them the great Creator gives
to

to mankind, the most striking display of his majesty, power, and goodness, *He makes the clouds his pavilion*, from whence he utters the voice of his excellency, at which the mountains are moved out of their places, and the pillars of the earth do tremble. By them he watereth and refresheth the earth; and makes it a nursing mother for the various tribes of its inhabitants. He useth the clouds not only for mercy, but for correction; and by them * *turns a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein*. When the Psalmist calls upon all nature to celebrate the praises of its Creator, he thus begins, † *Praise ye the Lord from the Heavens, praise him in the heights*.

On the THIRD DAY, *God said, Let the waters under the Heaven be gathered together, and let the dry land appear*. Whether this was brought about by an act of omnipotent power alone, or whether by the instrumentality of second causes we are not told. If by the last, some are of opinion ‡; that fire was the agent employed. Others impute this phenomenon §, to the motion of the earth

* Ps. cvii. 34. † Ps. cxlviii. 1. ‡ Ray on the Creation.

§ All circular motion arising from a contest, between the centripetal and centrifugal forces, the particles of water being in a fluid state, would be agitated by their centrifugal force

earth about its own axis, which they suppose would draw the water from the poles, and cause the sea to form a belt around the equator; by which, the globe would be divided into three parts¹; two of earth, and one of water. They think that this theory corresponds with the words of Moses, when he says, that the waters under the Heaven were gathered together unto one place.

The next part of the grand process is thus related, *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so.* Whether plants were created in their seeds only, and dispersed over the superficial parts of land and water, which had power given them to hatch and bring them forth; or whether they were created in full maturity; are questions not easy to be decided, but of no importance.

On the FOURTH DAY, *God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of Heaven, to divide the day*

force to fly off from the center as far as possible, (like a stone in a sling, which, when once put in motion, always keeps the string at its utmost stretch.) But not being able to overcome the attractive or centripetal force at the equator, the waters would be there detained like the stone in the sling, at the utmost distance from the center. Clayton's Vindic.
Let. 6.

from

from the night : and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. The meaning is; that thro' their influences, there might be day and night, summer and winter, seed time and harvest; and that by them, men might be enabled to mark the different portions of time. Then it is added, *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night : he made the stars also.* It would appear from one intention which these lights were made to serve, namely, to bring about seasons, that the annual revolution of the earth around the sun had already commenced, and that the obliquity of the earth's axis was then the same, as it has continued ever since. Many have adopted an opinion, that the light which God created at first, having circulated about the earth for three days, was on the fourth, distributed to the sun and moon to form their different bodies. But for obvious reasons, this is highly improbable. Moses does not say, that the bodies of these luminaries were created on the fourth day, but that they were then made to *divide the light from the darkness, &c.* Therefore it is probable that there is nothing more intended by this description, than to inform us, that the atmosphere, being gradually cleared, and purged of its gross vapours, on the fourth day, became fit for the transmission of light ;

light; so that the bodies of the heavenly luminaries would then have become visible and apparent, providing there had been inhabitants on the earth to behold them. It is unnatural to suppose that the earth was created before the sun, which is a million of times larger, and being placed in the center, of this planetary system, communicates light and heat to the whole, and regulates the motion of every celestial body belonging to it. What artist would construct the lesser wheels of a machine, before he contrived and formed the main spring, which was to adjust every movement in it. It is said, after the *lesser light to rule the night, he made the stars also*. The words *he made* are not in the original, but are added in our version: and nothing more is here meant, than, having made the moon to rule the night, the stars likewise answered the same purpose, by their successive rotations; for * Job expressly declares that there were stars before the earth was founded. The whole of these luminaries are said to be placed in the firmament of Heaven, because we see them thro' the firmament or air; and their distance being so great, that we can form no judgment of it, they all seem to us equally near.

I shall subjoin to the above, one remark more, namely, that tho' the Mosaic creation, is one of

* Job xxxviii. 4. 7.

the most singular and extraordinary events, on which the human mind can ruminate, yet with God, to whom all things are alike easy, it is nothing more than an ordinary occurrence in his kingdom of providence. And events apparently similar have not escaped the observation of learned and inquisitive men, as will appear from the following consideration.

When we look up to the Heavens, and behold those fixed stars, whose numbers raise our admiration, we are led to conclude, and not without reason, that each of these is a sun to a planetary system, and shines with its native splendor*; because it seems incredible, that the light of our sun should reach to such an inconceivable distance, and be from their bodies reflected down to us. Now, repeated observations have clearly proved, that new stars have appeared in parts of that

* I shall here quote, as suitable to this subject, a fine reflection made by an ingenious man, whose piety seems to keep pace with his philosophy. "What an august and amazing conception, does this give of the works of the Creator? Thousands of thousands of suns, multiplied without any end, and all ranged around us, at immense distances from each other, attended by ten thousand times, ten thousand worlds, peopled with myriads of intelligent beings, formed for endless progression in perfection and felicity, If so much power, wisdom, goodness, and magnificence is displayed in the material creation, which is the least inconsiderable part of the universe, how great, how wise, how good must he be, who made and governs the whole?" Fergus. Astron.

unbounded space, where none were visible before; which were probably new creations, resembling such as Moses here describes. Likewise, former stars have been observed to grow faint, to lose their brightness, and at last totally disappear. So, the time may come, when our sun like ourselves may wax old, when his light, like that of the human eye, may grow feeble and dim; till at last losing his vital heat, both he himself, and the whole system, of which, under God, he is the soul and center, become one universal chaos.

We proceed now to the operations of the FIFTH DAY. *And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly, the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth, in the open firmament of Heaven. And God created great whales, and every living thing that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind.* Air and water having now attained a degree of solution, which rendered them fit for the support of animal life, the Creator furnished both with proper inhabitants. Whales are mentioned, as being the most eminent creatures, on account of their enormous size. In the next chapter, fowls are said to be *made out of the ground*: perhaps they were formed, partly of earth and partly of water; for many of them are amphibious, and capable of

living on either element. Some remark that fowls and fishes, are said to proceed from the same materials, on account of the resemblance betwixt them. Both are generally oviparous, and remarkably prolific; and flying and swimming are pretty similar.

ON the SIXTH DAY, *God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.* It would appear from this description, that Moses was a better philosopher, than many who have since assumed that name. For, he not only says, but repeats it, that every creature was to proceed from its own kind. The most accurate experiments have ascertained the truth of this position, that there is no such thing in the world, as equivocal generation, but that all creatures whatever, yea the smallest insects, are generated by parents after their own kind. And it is an established fact, that animals which come from promiscuous mixtures, never afterwards propagate either species. The works of this and the former day, differ from all those which had been accomplished on the preceeding days, when the laws of nature were probably employed by their author in modeling and forming this globe. Nothing less than an immediate exertion of divine power could communicate life;
this

this being an essential part of his all-glorious character, that * *with him is the fountain of life.* †

Some have entertained an opinion, that there was only one pair, or a male and female, of every creature animate and inanimate, created at first. But this hypothesis seems somewhat paradoxical, and indeed is scarcely credible. Plants cannot remove from the place where they are fixed. Many of their seeds are heavy, and cannot easily be transported by the winds: and yet we find them on the tops of far distant mountains; therefore at first they must have been spread over the face of the whole earth. And that it should be so, appears necessary for supplying different animals with food. As to aquatic creatures and fowls, Moses tells us, that they were brought forth abundantly.

There has been another question agitated among philosophers, Whether all creatures, which have already been, or hereafter shall be, were at first actually created by God, or whether he gave to each a power of generating and producing their own kind. The nature of my work prevents me, from entering minutely into this subject: but I shall offer the following remarks.

† Generation is a work, which indicates art and reason, above the reach, not only of the brute

* Pf. xxxvi. 9.

† See Ray on the Creation.

creation, but even of the most enlightened of the rational kind. Therefore as generation must be the result of nothing less, than infinite power and wisdom, many learned men conclude, that God, before he ceased from creating, and rested from his works on the seventh day, did actually create, or at least form the beginnings of creatures, of every species, which has existed or shall exist upon earth. I own, this idea fills us with wonder and admiration, and so do all the works of God when properly investigated. We think it impossible, that innumerable myriads of creatures should be contained in the ovary of the first female. But how small, I had almost said, infinitely small, may be the *stamina*, or first principles of life? Yea with respect to ourselves, after the earth has claimed as its own, our corporeal bodies, these very *stamina* may serve, as the basis or groundwork of our future heavenly bodies, and they may constitute the difference of identity among the whole of the human race. Some ingenious philosophers declare, that there are millions of millions of creatures in one drop of water. How small then must be the parts of each contained and containing? But nothing can give us a more sensible idea of the numberless parts of matter, which may be included within a small space, than by considering the quantity of effluvia or exhalations which
arise

arise from bodies of different kinds. Perhaps one of these of no great magnitude, will send forth in a short time a quantity of particles, more in number than all the human race, which have lived, or ever will live upon the earth. For these reasons, many think that there is no new creation or production, or in the words of the Preacher, * *That there is nothing new under the sun*; but that God, by the operation of the laws of nature, hath clothed every creature with a † *body that pleaseth him*.

‡ An elegant writer observes, “That the whole creation may be still beautifying in the eye of its Maker, and drawing nearer to him in greater degrees of resemblance.” And indeed, every observation we make upon the works of God in this lower world, confirms the truth of this pleasing reflection. We cannot find one being throughout the kingdoms of nature, whether vegetable, animal, or rational, but which, from a small and slender beginning, gradually arrives at higher degrees of maturity and perfection. Such, according to Moses, was the condition of the great globe on which we dwell. From a chaos at first, in process of time, it grew up to its present beautiful form and proportion. The great, and to us incomprehensible work of creation, began at the lower part of the scale, viz. the inanimate

* Eccl. i. 9. † 1 Cor. xv. 37. ‡ Spectator, No. 111.

world ; then it ascended to the vegetable ; afterwards to the animal ; and lastly to man, the master-piece of the whole.

We are told, that on the SIXTH DAY, after God had made every thing else, he said, *Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness.* In the second chapter of Genesis, which seems to be an appendix to the first, the historian mentions several particulars relating to the creation of our first parents, which he had omitted in his first account, lest they should interrupt the thread of his narration. These I shall now arrange in their natural order, and briefly endeavour to illustrate the whole.

The first thing worthy of notice in the above passage, is, the Almighty speaking in the plural number, *Let us make man.* In the opinion of many, this is nothing but a majestic stile, such as a monarch would use, when sitting in the midst of his council ; and the reason why he expressed himself with such dignity, was, because he was now about to make a nobler creature upon earth, than any which his hand had yet framed. Others think that the words are addressed to the angels. This appears highly improbable, when we consider, that tho' these celestial beings minister to our benefit in this life, yet they can have no part in sending us into it ; for that is the prerogative of God alone.

alone. If the words were addressed to any being, it is more likely they were to him, who is stiled *Emmanuel*, God with us. Many pious and learned men are of opinion, that the most high Jehovah, is infinitely beyond the reach of all created beings: and the scriptures expressly declare that no man hath *seen or heard God at any time*: therefore they suppose, that all divine communications to the world from the beginning, have been imparted thro' some organ or medium, and this they take for granted, was none else, but that illustrious being, called by way of eminence the only begotten and well beloved Son of God; who was delegated by his Father, to create, superintend, and finally judge the world; who personally appeared to our first parents, and to the patriarchs of old; gave the law from Mount Sinai; assumed various titles expressive of the highest and nearest relations, in which he stood to mankind in general, but in a more particular manner to the posterity of Abraham, and after them to his own followers; who in the fulness of time was made flesh and dwelt among us, and having died in obedience to the will of God, and for the deliverance of sinners, ascended up into Heaven; from whence he will direct the concerns of his kingdom, till at last * *he deliver it up to his father, that God may be*

* 1 Cor. xv. 24. 28.

all in all. One cannot help thinking, that the apostles of Christ, had such an opinion of their Lord and Master, when one of the most enlightened among them expresses himself thus, * *Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in Heaven and Earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

In the creation of man there are four things mentioned, worthy of our observation.

1. His body was formed out of the *dust of the ground*. His name Adam, i. e. red earth, bespeaks his origin. Dust has a natural tendency to change, to fall asunder and be dissolved; this clearly proves, that Adam in his original constitution was frail, and that his body if left to be affected by the established laws and ordinary course of nature, must have gradually declined, and come at last to a state of dissolution. An apostle declares, that the † *first man was of the earth, earthy*, and as such liable to corruption. And it is remarkable that these words are used by way of contrast, betwixt a corruptible body, and an in-

* Colos. i. 15.

† 1 Cor. xv. 47.

corruptible; such as the saints of God will be clothed with, in a future state.

2. God is said, to *have breathed into Adam's nostrils, the breath of life, and he became a living soul*; or in other words a living person. In sacred writing, the word soul, is used in various and different senses; therefore when we either write, or talk about the soul, we can never convey clear and distinct ideas, unless we first ascertain the meaning of the word, which we choose at that time to adopt. But by God's breathing into the man's nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living soul, may be understood, his endowing him both with animal and rational life, with all the powers of body, and capacities of mind, such as self motion, reason and reflection, memory and imagination.

3. We are told, that *God made man in his own image, and after his own likeness*. Image and likeness are synonymous terms, and repetitions are common in the Hebrew language. Commentators have been divided in their opinions, about the meaning of the image of God, in which Adam was made. The reason is this, one thing may be the image of another in many respects; and in a variety of instances man may resemble his Maker. But none can say, which, or how many of these, Moses had in view, when he made use of this

expression. Some think, that the image of God on man, consists in nothing but the higher powers of his mind, which give him such a superiority over the inferior creation. Others are of opinion, that this image arises, from the power and dominion, wherewith the Creator vested him by an express grant; because he no sooner made man in his own image, than he added, by way of explanation, *And let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* All writers agree that the above are parts of the image. But as the greatest absurdities, may pass current for articles of faith, till they are tried at the tribunal of right reason, (which can never contradict revelation) a definition of this phrase has been adopted by divines, and interwoven into their systems, viz. that the image in which Adam was created, consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; and that none ever did, or can bear this image, but our first parents in a state of innocence, and such of their posterity, on whose souls, this image is renewed by irresistible grace. As for Adam's knowledge when first coming into life, it will appear in the sequel of his history. Righteousness and holiness consist in habitual obedience to the laws of God; but no man can acquire a habit

habit before he perform an act; and no law can be either obeyed or transgressed, till it is made known, and time afforded to try obedience.

The above comment upon *the image of God*, is not founded on the history of Moses but on the writings of the Apostle Paul, who abounds with figures, metaphors, similes, and allegorical allusions to the history of the Old Testament, particularly the histories of the creation, the fall, and the giving of the law from Mount Sinai: and it will be found, that the greatest part of these wild and extravagant doctrines, which have marred the simplicity of the gospel, have originated from men taking these, or such like figurative expressions among the sacred writers in a strict and literal sense. To illustrate this fatal truth in the present instance. The great Apostle Paul, with a view to magnify the grace of God to a sinful world, compares the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity, to a new creation. He says, *that by breaking down the wall between Jews and Gentiles, God made of twain one new man**. Here, and in other parts of his writings, he personifies the Christian character or the Christian church, and calls it *a new man*; † *a new creature*; ‡ *born again*†; *made and built of God*. In opposition to this, he places

* Eph. ii. 15. 16. † 2 Cor. v. 17. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 5.
Col. ii. 7.

the Gentile world, with its wicked deeds, and calls it *the * old man*. He then, introduces another part of the natural creation to make his simile more full and compleat, viz. *The image of God on man*, and tells us that the image of the new man, was *knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness*, which he says, *is created after God †*: the meaning is, God hath constituted the Christian church, in knowledge, wisdom, and holiness, after the purity and rectitude of his own nature, in order to promote rectitude and religion among men. Now, can there be a greater impropriety of speech, than to ascribe to Adam in a literal sense, what was figuratively applied to the Christian character or church. The image of the former was natural, and purely the work of God alone. The image of the latter, viz. the new man; is moral. It supposes the concurrence of our own will, and cannot take place without our own consent.

The image of God, in which Adam was created, in my opinion, is nothing but a phrase expressive of the superior dignity of man above all other creatures; whether we consider the form and figure of his body; the majesty of his countenance; all the higher powers and faculties of his mind; or his authority and dominion over this world, as the vicegerent of his Maker. In scripture, a thing

* Col. iii. 9. † Eph. iv. 24.

is said to be of *God*, or of *the Lord*, when it is remarkably eminent, thus * *the cedars of Lebanon*, as being so lofty, are called, *the trees of the Lord*. But all mankind, are made in the image of God, as well as Adam. This appears from an express and positive prohibition given to Noah against the shedding of human blood, where the reason assigned is this, † *For in the image of God made he man*.

4. It is said, when God created man, *he created them male and female*. One would naturally conclude from these words, that Eve was created on the same day with Adam. The manner of her formation was different from that of her husband. He was made of rude dust, but she of dust already dignified and refined; which accounts for the superior delicacy of the female sex. The history of Eve's original, is by our translators, connected with an incident, to which it has no relation. We are told, ‡ *God brought all the beasts of the field, &c. to Adam, to see what he would call them, but for him there was not found an help meet for him*, meaning surely, among all these creatures. This suggests a sentiment rather crude and indelicate. Therefore the best critics have remarked, that the last part of the sentence, should be detached from the first, and the particle *but*, rendered *and*; when

* Pl. civ. 16.

† Gen. ix. 6.

‡ Gen. ii. 20.

a new

a very logical translation
not at all

a new subject is introduced, which should begin a new verse, and read thus, *And the Lord God, had not supplied Adam with a help meet for him: but he caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; and the rib, which the Lord had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.* Adam's sleep was no doubt supernatural, as well as the whole transaction. Yet it seems, like some of the prophets, he was all the time in a trance or vision, and clearly perceived the whole of this miraculous operation; for as soon as he saw Eve, he said, * *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man, i. e. she shall be called a she or female man.* Moses does not think it necessary here, to repeat the words spoken at the creation of Adam, *That God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul;* because Eve's being called a help meet for him, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, implied the greatest resemblance possible in the powers of body and mind; so that if the one was formed after the image of God, so was the other also. And to shew that union and affection, which ought to subsist betwixt man and wife, it is added, † *Therefore*

* Gen. ii. 23.

† Ch. ii. 24.

shall

shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his own wife. These words were not spoken by Adam, who as yet could have no idea of father or mother, but are added by Moses, to shew that marriage is a positive institution of God, and are * quoted by our Saviour as the words of God himself.

After the Almighty had pronounced his blessing on our first parents, the first commandment which he gave them, was to † *be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.* Doubtless, one great end for which God sent mankind into life, was to propagate their own species, and indulge those instincts, which he had implanted within their breasts, by watching over, rearing, and training up their tender offspring; so that the world might still continue furnished with inhabitants, till the number should be compleated, which infinite wisdom shall think proper, to bring upon the theatre of human life. No wonder then, that *children* are called, ‡ *God's heritage.*

Having mentioned the first comfort of human life, viz. that of social enjoyment, the Almighty proceeds to shew Adam and Eve, what regard he had for their temporal support and provision, when he says to them, § *Behold I have given you*

* Matt. xix. 5.

† Gen. i. 28.

‡ Ps. cxxvii. 3.

§ Gen. i. 29.

every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth; and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat. These words plainly declare, that this grant of food to man was confined to vegetables alone: and it is highly probable that animal food was never used before the deluge, by any who paid regard to the authority of God, and of their father Adam. For had this kind of food, been included in the original grant, yea had it even been permitted, we can see no reason, why the prohibition against eating blood should not have been published to Adam as well as afterwards to Noah.

Why Almighty God was pleased to let the creation of this world, unfold itself by degrees, in the progress of six days operations, or why he did not produce it in a moment by his all powerful command, is one of those *secrets which belong unto the Lord*. But as the supreme being in all his ways and works has a regard to the happiness of his creatures, so, in the process of the creation, he gives us an opportunity of contemplating, in a more easy and perspicuous manner, the exertions of his omnipotent power and wisdom. And indeed from every observation, which we are capable of making upon the operations of nature, we find none of its productions to be instantaneous, but the whole of them gradual and progressive.

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The sacred historian acquaints us, that the time employed by the Creator in making the world and every thing in it, was intended to serve as a pattern to us, how long we were to work, and when to rest; for when he had finished the whole of his works, * *he blessed the SEVENTH DAY, and sanctified it: because in it he rested from all his works which he had made.* Thus the Almighty, by a positive law set apart the seventh day, from all worldly business and employment, and consecrated it to the purposes of religious meditation, and of public and private worship. The time of this institution was well suited, to the condition of our first parents. The day after their creation, being a day of rest, by that means, they were not hurried into life, nor were their early and tender minds employed about any worldly scenes, before they were able to bear them. Besides, they had time to digest such communications, as their Maker had already imparted to them.

The sanctifying of the sabbath, is the first and oldest of God's institutions, and therefore must have a real foundation in the nature of man, and be conducive to the great ends of his creation. We were all made for happiness, and the primary intention of our being sent into life, was, that we

* Gen. ii. 2.

might learn and practise, the principles of right action and genuine piety, and thus acquire peace and comfort in this world, and grow up to a ripeness for a blessed immortality hereafter. But we can never attain to this temper and disposition of mind, without frequent reflection, and serious application of thought. To inure ourselves to this employment, some time must be set apart: and surely God alone best knows, what portion of time is most competent for these good purposes.

The sabbath is not mentioned in the book of Genesis: which however, is no argument that the patriarchs did not observe it; for in this book, we have clear intimations of a regard being paid to that institution. * Noah sent the dove thrice out of the ark, after he had waited each time seven days. And † Jacob is said to have fulfilled Leah's week. This shews us that long before Moses was born, time was reckoned by weeks, which can be referred to no other original, but the consecrating of the seventh day at the creation. It seems, the Israelites, during their residence in Egypt, had either forgot, or neglected to observe the sabbath; but after they left that country, it was the first point of religion settled

* Gen. viii. 12.

† Gen. xxix. 28.

among them; and it was distinguished from other days of the week, by the * *manna* ceasing to fall on that day. The Jewish sabbath was fenced with sanctions peculiar to their œconomy. All these, like the other parts of the ritual law, were nailed to the cross of Christ; but, as to the sabbath itself, our † Saviour declared that he was Lord of that day. Of consequence, it must be an ordinance belonging to his kingdom, and as such ranked among his laws. The apostles of Christ, changed the sabbath from the last to the first day of the week, in memory of our Saviour's resurrection, which doubtless they would not have done, without a special commission from him. This day, has ever since been stiled the Lord's day; and has been appropriated to the purposes of rest and religion, throughout the universal church of Christ.

Of all the positive institutions, which the father of lights hath communicated to the posterity of Adam, under the patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian œconomy, there is not another, which hath such a happy influence on the great interests of mankind, whether considered as inhabitants of this world, or candidates for a future immortality, as that of the sabbath. For which reason, in every

* Exod. xvi. 26.

† Luke vi. 5.

country where Christianity has been established, civil laws are enacted, suitable to the genius and circumstances of the people, to give a sanction to this institution. Whoever therefore is guilty of openly profaning the Lord's day, can neither be a good Christian, nor yet a loyal subject*.

* See this subject fully discussed by Archd. Paley, in his *Moral and Political Philosophy*. Ch. 6. 7. 8.

LECTURE III.

GENESIS i. 31.

And God saw every thing that he had made; and behold it was very good.

ALmighty God hath communicated to the world different revelations of his will and pleasure, to assist mankind in their inquiries after him: but we abuse the divine goodness when we imagine, that revelation was ever intended to supersede the use of reason, and obstruct the light of our own minds. Reason refers to revelation for the operations of a first cause, and revelation appeals to reason, to explain its meaning, and prove the utility of its doctrines. And thus, the books of nature and grace mutually support each other, equally elevate our conceptions, and incite our piety. They have an equal claim to our regard, both being written by the finger of the one eternal and incomprehensible God*. Therefore, it can never be deemed presumption in man, to investigate the works of his Maker, and

* Watson. Chem. Pref.

to exercise the higher powers of his mind, in contemplating that wisdom, power, and goodness, which he displays in his natural and moral government of the world. But our inquiries into the ways and works of God, are of a very limited nature, and we can carry them no farther than to effects arising from secondary causes. With respect to the first cause of all, tho' we see and feel him in every portion of matter, we are entire strangers to the manner of his agency. This is well expressed by an antient writer, * *Behold I go forward, but he is not there, and backward but I cannot perceive him. On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him : he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.*

The Deity could receive no additional happiness or glory from the exertion of his creative power ; for he has always possessed, and will for ever possess these attributes, in the highest degree. Therefore we cannot conceive any other end which he had in view, in forming the universe, and every being within it, but to diffuse happiness among an endless variety of creatures, in such portions as were suited to their different capacities and conditions of life.

The pride of man should not flatter him so far, as to make him believe, that all things were

* Job xxiii. 8.

created for his sake alone, yet it will appear from all the observations which we can make, that every thing around us, contributes in some measure to our happiness and comfort. This pleasing reflection, I shall endeavour to illustrate, in the subsequent discourse, by delineating in a plain and easy manner, some of the more eminent instances of divine wisdom and benevolence, which fall within the reach of human investigation, and which are apparent in the system to which we belong. Let us then for order's sake begin with those parts of the natural world, which are above us.

When we view the firmament which envelops this globe, especially in a clear and serene night, it has the appearance of a canopy stretched around us, beautifully studded with stars, some of greater and some of lesser magnitude; all of which, on account of their immense distance, seem to be placed on the superficies of the same concave sphere. The number of stars visible to the naked eye in either hemisphere, does not exceed one thousand, but many thousands more have been discovered by the assistance of optical glasses: and were a spectator to be placed in one of those celestial bodies, so remote, that its light has never yet reached our earth, an equal, yea perhaps a greater number of stars, would even there dis-

close themselves to his view. So great, and to us unbounded are the works of God!

Among all the luminaries of the sky, the sun first merits our attention, on account of his magnitude and splendor, and that energy wherewith he pervades the whole of this system. When the pious Psalmist remarks, that *the Heavens declare the glory of God*, he particularly illustrates this from the sun by two beautiful similitudes. Alluding to those fragrant odours, which are excited by his genial and morning heat, he compares him to *a bridegroom coming out of his chamber*. With respect to the steadiness and regularity of his motion, he says, * *He rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race. His going is from the end of Heaven, and his circuit is to the ends of it*. Here, I would beg leave to observe, that the scriptures address us in a style, suited to the common apprehension of things; and we mistake their intention, when we go to them to learn abstruse points of philosophy. These we must investigate by the use of our own reason. The sacred writings teach us something more momentous, something which reason could never impart, I mean the knowledge of the one true God, and those duties which we owe to him. It is a doctrine universally received among learned men, that the sun is placed in the center

* Ps. xix. 5.

of this system; that he remains at rest in his station; and that all the other planets move round him in their periodical courses. This opinion is supported by strong and irrefragable arguments. It is thought that this earth bears no more proportion to the sun, than a pebble does to a millstone. Now, if these two were chained together, would it not be unnatural to suppose, that the pebble would always remain at rest, and incessantly drag around it the millstone with inconceivable velocity. The daily motion of the earth upon its own axis is amazingly great*; but were the sun to revolve around the earth, the velocity of his motion would exceed all belief. Our deception in this matter, is well illustrated, by a person sitting in a ship, and sailing in smooth water. All the time he beholds the land flying from him, while in fact, the land continues at rest, and he himself is only moved. The sun is like his Maker; he shines with his own light, but all other bodies within his sphere, have no light but what they derive from him. No wonder then, that the blinded nations should worship this star: for tho' he is no deity, he is his brightest repre-

* As the diameter of the earth is about 25,000 miles, it moves around its axis at the rate of above 1,000 miles an hour. But were the sun to go round the earth in one day, he would move at the rate of 22,000,000 miles in an hour.

mentative in the visible Heavens. It is to him that we owe the exercise of the noblest faculty which we enjoy, I mean that of vision. Without the sun, life itself would soon die away; and nothing but darkness and death universally prevail. He brings about day and night, and the varying seasons of the year, and with his light and heat, he cheers and invigorates all nature.

Next to the sun, the most striking object in the Heavens is the moon. This is only a secondary planet; yet it appears the largest, on account of its nearness to the earth*, to which it is appointed a satellite or attendant, and as such answers many beneficial purposes. The moon by reflecting the beams of the sun, after he has past beneath our horizon, illuminates the atmosphere, and in some measure compensates for the darkness of the night. It assists the wandering traveller to find his way, and directs the anxious mariner, when tossed amidst the raging billows of the deep. The moon is the great cause of tides in the sea, and by thus keeping up a motion in that element, preserves it from corruption, which would soon become fatal to its own inhabitants, and even to those who live upon land. Likewise the moon, which we are told, with other stars was *made to rule the*

* The moon's distance from the earth is computed to be 240,000 miles, and its diameter 2,180.

night, enables us to fix and ascertain determinate periods of time, and to form systems of geography, chronology, and astronomy, sciences of the greatest utility to mankind.

The next thing which falls under our consideration is the air or atmosphere*, This is that subtile and transparent fluid†, which the Creator expanded about this globe, and which he *saw very good*, as conducing to the life and comfort of every creature upon it. Of all bodies which we know, the air is by far the most compressible; on the other hand, its spring or elastic quality is so great, that in the opinion of many, a cubical foot of it may be so dilated, as to fill a space of a thousand miles extent. The air possesses weight or gravity‡ as well as any other body whatever,

* The atmosphere is computed to be about 45 miles high.

† There is a law in nature called repulsion, owing to which, the particles of bodies, when they do not come within the sphere of their mutual attraction, recede and fly off to a greater distance: and when these particles have no tendency to unite, but to repel one another, they form a body which we call a fluid; and such is air.

‡ It is proved by repeated experiments, that a foot of air upon the surface of the earth, weighs nearly as much as 33 feet of water, or 29 inches of quicksilver: but one cubical foot of water weighs about 63 pounds. Hence it appears that a man of a large size, supposing the surface of his body equal to 15 square feet carries upon him a load of air above 30,000 pound weight; tho' sometimes, by a change in the atmosphere, he carries 4,000 pound more or less.

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which may be proved by many experiments, but the barometer or weather glass, demonstrates it sufficiently. Yet it's weight is constantly varying, on account of those exhalations, which are incessantly arising from every body upon earth, and which produce different degrees of heat and cold. The upper parts of the air, pressing upon the lower, makes them accede nearer to one another; consequently its density must be greatest at the earth's surface, and must constantly increase from its surface to its center. The incumbent weight of the air upon this globe is so immensely great, that it would instantly crush in pieces our bodies, and every thing else of a compressible nature, were it not for a happy provision made by providence, to counteract this fatal effect, viz. that the air within a body counterbalances the air without it, so that the one operates just as much in our favour, as the other would do to our prejudice. By every trial hitherto attempted, it appears that the air can neither be fixed nor congealed so as to become a solid body.

The benefits which redound to every creature upon earth, from this noble appendage of our globe, are great and numerous. I shall content myself with the recital of a few.

Were it not for the air, the sun would seem to us at mid-day, nothing more than a lamp in a
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dark night; and when we turned our face to him, his beams would blind us with their effulgence; but passing thro' the air, these beams are reflected and turned a thousand different ways, which makes them diffuse a refreshing light and heat over the whole face of nature. To the same cause, we likewise owe the twilight; for until the sun pass eighteen degrees below the horizon, the sun's beams strike upon the atmosphere, and are by it so refracted and broken, that they impart to us different degrees of light. Winds which are so conducive to health and life derive their origin from the air. When any part of this fluid is so rarefied by heat, as to lose its equilibrium, all the adjoining parts, which are of a denser quality, will rush into it like water endeavouring to recover its level; and this motion or current is what we call wind; the benefits of which are felt and acknowledged in every region and climate upon earth. When a dead calm prevails for any length of time, the vapours are condensed, and become putrid and noxious, till a fanning breeze dispels them, and restores salubrity to the air. By winds men are enabled to cross the seas; and far distant regions are united together, by the mutual ties of friendship, trade and commerce. The atmosphere is a rich storehouse, furnished with clouds and watery vapours, which distil upon
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the parched earth in seasonable dews and rains, and by thus giving it moisture, enable it to yield nourishment for all the numberless tribes which inhabit it. It is well known, that the air affords a vital principle, not only to vegetables, but to animals of every kind. It also gives life and body to flame, for fire will soon languish and die away without fresh supplies of air. Another great benefit which we derive from air, is the conveyance of sound. Were it not for this medium, we should be deprived of one of the most refined pleasures upon earth, I mean that of social conversation. We should also want those enchanting pleasures which flow from the powers of melody and music. Air is necessary to scatter abroad odours of every kind, and were it not for this element the rose would affect us as little, as the thorn on which it grows. I shall conclude this article with the reflection of a pleasing and ingenious writer *. ‘ The air
‘ is an element, of which avarice cannot deprive
‘ us, and which power cannot monopolize. The
‘ treasures of the earth, the verdure of the fields,
‘ and even the refreshments of the stream, are
‘ too often seen going only to assist the luxuries
‘ of the great; while the less fortunate part of
‘ mankind, stand humble spectators of their in-

* Goldsmith’s *Animated Nature*. Ch. 19.

‘ croachments. But the air no limitations can
‘ bound, nor any land marks restrain. In this
‘ benign element, all mankind can boast an equal
‘ possession ; and for this we have all equal obli-
‘ gations to Heaven. We consume a part of the
‘ air for our sustenance while we live ; and when
‘ we die, our putrefying bodies give back the
‘ supply, which during life, we have accumulated
‘ from the general mass.’

I shall now descend to the earth, and consider some of the more eminent traces of goodness and wisdom with which it abounds.

Our globe seems to possess a favourite place in the planetary system ; for had it been nearer to the sun, it might have been parched and burnt up with his heat, or had it been as far removed from his influence as some of the most distant planets, it might have been bound up with the rigors of frost and chilling cold ; but its temperature shews the bounty of the Creator, and bespeaks *man* its principal inhabitant, to be the object of his peculiar care. The figure of the earth is that of a sphere or globe, at least nearly so*. Its rotundity is obvious to the naked eye, if no object retards our sight. When a ship at sea is sailing to the harbour, those upon land first descry the top of the mast, and as it draws nearer,

* See page 30, Lect. II.

the whole body of the vessel gradually doth appear. The highest mountains upon earth, are no more objections to its globular form, than the small asperities on the skin of an orange, are to its being round and smooth. There is apparent wisdom in giving this form to the earth. A globe admits its parts to be better compacted and united together than any other figure, and is the most capacious of any. I may add, that a sphere is the fittest for revolving upon its own axis; which our earth does once in twenty-four hours; and this is called its *diurnal motion*. It seems the infinite wisdom of the Creator, hath thought fit to impress upon all great bodies throughout the universe, a regular and uniform motion, and by this, to diversify the condition of their different inhabitants. Motion seems more congruous to the active energy of the first cause, than inactivity and rest, while at the same time it affords the strongest proof of his existence: for it is impossible that matter could ever move itself. Now, from every observation which we can make upon those great bodies which compose the system to which we belong, it appears that each of them, as well as our earth, has a twofold motion. The first of these is about its own axis; and the other about the sun. What law the Almighty employed, either to begin or continue the former, we know not;

not : but we are not so entire strangers to what occasions the latter. There is a law or power imprest upon the material world, commonly called *attraction* ; or in other words, a certain influence or tendency in every particle and body in nature, to draw every other particle and body to itself ; and this influence is always in proportion to the quantity of matter which any body doth possess. Now, the sun being by far the largest body in the whole system, is of consequence possess'd of much the greatest share of this attractive power, and would therefore draw all the other planets to itself. To prevent and counteract this effect, the great author of nature, gave at first to every planet a projectile or impulsive force, which would have made the whole, if not retarded, move for ever forward, thro' the regions of boundless space. But the attractive power of the sun drawing them from this direction, they pursue a course exactly balanced between these contrary directions, and each planet obeying two opposite forces, like a stone whirled about in a sling, circulates around the sun, the great center of heat, light and motion. In this manner, the harmony of the whole system is preserved ; and all the heavenly bodies belonging to it, perform their revolutions about the great luminary of the sky, in times proportioned to their distances, and the greatness of the circles

which they describe. In like manner, the lesser planets obey the greater, which become, the respective centers of their different motions. And it is highly probable, that comets, which appear among us like awful and dangerous intruders, are under the influence of the same laws. I shall only farther observe, that to the annual revolution of the earth about the sun, we owe the vicissitudes of summer and winter, of heat and cold, which serve in a great measure to enhance many of the other comforts of human life.

After its figure and motion, we shall now consider the face or appearance of the earth. This consists of two parts; the one solid, which we call land; and the other fluid which we call water or sea. The latter is computed to cover at least three quarters of the superficies of the whole globe. Whether the sea is now, more or less extensive, than in the antediluvian world we cannot say, but we may judge of the immense quantity of water within the bosom of the mighty ocean, when, according to the computation of some ingenious men, were it entirely drained of its water, it would require eight hundred years for all the rivers upon earth, tho' flowing in their usual course, to fill it again to its present dimension. Some endeavour to account for the saltish or briny taste of sea water, from the vast quantity of minerals

als within the sea itself, and which are carried by rivers into it. But in my opinion, the quality of this water has been the same from the *beginning*, as being necessary for the health and life of its own inhabitants, and for many other beneficial purposes to man and beast. Besides, salt, together with its continued agitation, preserves the sea from putrefaction, and from being bound up with ice. Many are the advantages which mankind derive from this element. It yields luxurious food to the tables of the poor, as well as the rich. It sends up immense quantities of vapours, which, when dispersed by the winds, moisten the whole globe, and give rise to springs, and to rivers. It opens a way to the remotest corners of the earth, and makes all nations members of one large community; by admitting them to a participation of the same privileges in common. It has often been remarked, that there is an invariable proportion betwixt the height of the coast, and the depth of the adjacent sea. But when we behold the angry and raging billows of the troubled ocean threatening destruction to a neighbouring continent, we would be apt to imagine that nothing less than adamantine rocks could resist their impetuosity: yet he who formed this awful element, ** hath set bars and doors to it, and said, hitherto*

* Job xxxviii. 10.

shalt thou come and no further; and here thy proud waves shall be staid.

But leaving the sea, we shall now confine our remarks to those appearances, which nature presents us by land. And here, the first thing that strikes the eye of an attentive observer, is the inequalities upon the surface of this globe. Some make use of these, as arguments of the earth's deformity; whereas in truth, they contribute both to pleasure and to utility. * When we behold those lofty mountains, whose summits are generally enveloped with clouds, we are struck with a kind of solemn pleasure. On the one hand, they expand our imagination and gratify our curiosity; and on the other they excite the most august ideas of the power and wisdom of the great architect of this fabric; who exhibits to our view, those stupendous masses, to humble the pride of man, and convince him how minute and trifling are all the essays of human art and industry, when compared with the grandeur and magnificence of his works†. Mountains appear an useful part of the

* According to the most accurate measurements, the greatest mountains on earth do not exceed three miles in height.

† There are perhaps few places on this globe, where the above remark can be better verified, than from those mountains, which surround the celebrated lakes in Cumberland, especially in the neighbourhood of Keswick. There, the
traveller

creation, when we consider the many advantages which they yield. They conduce to the health of the sickly invalid, by giving him an opportunity of breathing a different and purer air. Within their bowels they contain rich treasures: and their surface produces a variety of useful and salutary plants. They afford shelter to many creatures; and sometimes to man himself: and they screen us from the blasts of cold and chilling winds. Moreover, mountains stop the progress of clouds and vapours, which the wind drives against their sides, and which being condensed by cold, give rise to springs and rivers, so necessary for the support of animal life.

The productions of this earth are commonly arranged, under the denomination of three different kingdoms, viz. the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal. My subject leads me to bestow a few remarks upon each. The mineral kingdom existed before the other two, and furnished materials for the subsistence of both. The contents of this kingdom are in general called fossils, that is,

traveller beholds the watery element display itself with dignity and lustre; while islands, fields, and woods lend to each other their mutual beauties, and complete the enchanting scene. But when he raises his eye above this humbler landscape, he is struck with the rugged face of nature, while at the same time she appears to him, clothed with awful majesty and grandeur.

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every thing dug out of the ground ; whether-metals, minerals, stones, salt, earths, &c. None can give an account of the different particles of which these consist ; tho' much has been said and written about the first principles of things, or what in philosophical stile, are called atoms ; meaning, the least parts into which matter can possibly be divided. But, can we conceive a portion of matter so small as to have no parts, or the smallest part whatever, capable of being divided into an infinite number of parts ? The truth is, so long as matter falls within the reach of our senses, we can think and talk intelligibly about it ; but when its composition is to us incomprehensible, the nature of it vanishes like the *baseless fabric of a vision*. To know the essence or substance of any thing, is perhaps beyond the capacity of an angel, and is the peculiar province of God alone : and yet we talk, write, and dispute about essences and substances, yea the substance of the supreme being himself, as dogmatically, as we do about those things, with which we are intimately acquainted. Some of the greatest and most enlightened philosophers, have been of opinion, that there is only one kind of matter, of the same substance and form, from which every thing in the world has been produced ; and that the vast variety scattered over the creation, arises from the different combinations

binations and motions of these original particles. It is evident that minerals of all kinds have their growth and accretion, as well as vegetables; tho' they were nearly coeval with the world. For we are told that Tubal Cain the fifth from Adam, *was an artificer of brass and iron*. Precious stones of various kinds were well known to the Jews and Egyptians in the days of Moses: and even the most rude and barbarous nations have had some knowledge of the ores of different metals. Minerals contribute to the happiness and comfort of mankind, in a variety of different ways. They often serve as a prevention and cure of bodily ailments. They enable us to build houses, to construct vessels, to sow and to reap, and to dress the fruits of the earth: and in short without them, we should scarcely have any tools or instruments for carrying on the common occupations of life. But, the kindness of providence is remarkable in this respect, that those minerals and metals which are most subservient to our benefit, such as iron, brass, lead, &c. are of all others the most common and plentiful, whereas the precious metals are more rare, and procured with greater difficulty; and this is wisely ordered to preserve and enhance their value. Gold and silver, like other gifts of nature, may be prostituted to the most criminal purposes; but it is a truth confirmed by experience,

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rience, that those people, who have never had the use of money introduced among them, have still continued rude and ignorant, and led a sordid and savage life; whereas this admirable and convenient mode of commutation, has carried along with it, civilization, arts, and sciences, by rendering it practicable and easy to reward and encourage ingenuity, industry, and merit, and to diffuse thro' society, not only the necessaries, but many of the comforts of human life. Doubtless there are various fossils and minerals, intombed within the bowels of the earth, which will never be exposed to human eye; for the greatest depth * to which avarice has ever yet penetrated below the surface of the globe, may be compared to a puncture made in the body of an elephant by the proboscis of a gnat †.

I come now to the vegetable kingdom which lies more within our view, and for that reason affords more proofs not only of the being, but likewise of the wisdom and goodness of God.

The face of our earth is spread over with herbs, plants, and trees; and tho' its beauty is not equal to that of its primeval state, yet it still presents us

* The most remarkable mine in Europe, is that at Cotteberg in Hungary, which is about 1,000 yards deep; but the depth of the earth from the surface to the center is above 4,000 miles.

† Watson's Chem.

with many resemblances of that delightful paradise, where the first of the human race enjoyed the fruits of their innocence, and were every moment feasted with the spontaneous productions of nature. As the vegetable world is the support of the animal, the bountiful preserver of all, hath provided every plant in it with its proper food and nourishment. When we open the earth to any depth, we find it composed of different layers, which generally lie in a horizontal position, and increase in density as we descend. But at the surface, there is a *stratum* or layer, which is the only one suitable for the support of plants. This is a light coat of blackish mold, called by some garden earth. We meet with a covering of this kind every where, unless the mold has been washed away with rain, or removed by some external violence. This nourishing earth, seems in a great measure to be formed from animal and vegetable bodies decaying, and being converted into its substance. Thus by a kind of circulation, the dissolution of animal and vegetable nature becomes the means of their renovation. This earth ascends into the atmosphere, and descends again in refreshing showers and softening dews. It mixes with other elements, and abounds in all kinds of water, but especially in rain water. It has such a tendency to unite with this element, that it enters

with it, as with a kind of vehicle into the pores of all plants whatever, and in proportion to its quantity augments their different bodies. The construction and configuration of plants is so curious and wonderful, that it has become the study, and engaged the attention of the most ingenious and inquisitive men. In plants we find a greater profusion and variety of beauty than in all the natural world beside. Our Saviour remarks this, when he mentions the superintending care of providence over the minuter parts of the creation, * *Consider, says he, the lillies of the field how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.* The human eye is soon fatigued with looking on the finest tints, and most exquisite colours made by the hand of man, yet it is not so with that colour, which the earth in general wears. It has often been remarked, that no colour pleases and refreshes the sight, equal to that of *green*; and it may be added as a proof of this, that in countries continually covered with snow, the inhabitants have their sight soon impaired, and become blind long before the usual course of nature. I shall not attempt to delineate that exquisite and divine art, which appears in

* Matt. vi. 28.

the formation of plants, nor to point out the various methods by which their seeds are dispersed over the earth for the preservation of their different species, as this has been frequently done by abler hands * ; but in general I shall remark, that the all-bountiful Creator, hath made vegetables to serve as a liberal provision for the support of man, and myriads of creatures besides ; and the tender and watchful care which he exerciseth over his great family in this sublunary world, is not more apparent in any instance whatever, than his making every climate upon earth produce peculiar herbs and plants, which of all other are fittest for the inhabitants, both for the purposes of food and medicine.

We shall now rise in the scale, and briefly survey the highest rank of created beings in this world, I mean, those which are endowed with life and animal motion. And here I must premise, that it is not an easy matter to draw the line betwixt the vegetable and animal kingdoms. The principal distinction seems to consist in this, that the former in general are unable to correct the disadvantages of their situation, as having no spon-

* See Ray's *Wisdom of God in the Creation* ; and Derham's *Physico-Theology*. Two of the best books for a reader of an ordinary capacity, that perhaps were ever written upon this subject.

taneous motion : whereas the latter, are capable of changing their place, to seek for food and shelter, and to defend themselves from danger. Yet it must be allowed, that both have many things in common ; tho' in nothing their resemblance is greater, than in this instance, that the same climate which gives luxuriance to the one, adds magnitude and strength to the other ; while on the contrary, where the plant is stunted in its growth, the animal is slender and diminutive. Among creatures endowed with a sensitive soul, the gradation is wonderful, and almost imperceptible. There appears a great chasm, betwixt the smallest insect, and the half reasoning elephant. Yet with what wisdom and art is this chasm filled up, so that the series becomes uniform and complete?

The limits which I have prescribed to myself in this work, will not permit me to gratify the curious inquirer, with a minute investigation of the different parts and properties of animals ; yea the subject itself is inexhaustible. I shall therefore make a few general observations, to elucidate the wisdom and beneficence of the great former of nature, in this part of his workmanship.

I have already remarked, that the doctrine of equivocal and spontaneous generation is now generally exploded ; tho' perhaps there are a few
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solitary instances of this kind to be met with. But men of great ingenuity and learning, who have made the deepest researches into the works of God, have adopted an opinion, and supported it with microscopical observations, that all nature teems with life: that there are organical particles* diffused thro' earth and water, which assume different figures, according to the receptacles into which they happen to enter; and that these particles at first constitute a fœtus or beginning of an animal, which afterwards gradually increases in growth and magnitude. However, there are three modes of generation which fall within the reach of our senses. The first is by cutting off, or separating parts of the same animal. It is said the millepedes, the earth worm, and other insects may be multiplied in this manner. But of all this class the most remarkable is the *polypus*. This creature has a new colony sprouting from its own body; each of which seeks its own prey, and what one devours circulates thro' the whole. If one of these insects be divided into a thousand parts, every one of these will become a new and living animal. But the other two ways of generation are the most common. Either by eggs, (such as produce in this manner are called *oviparous*) or

* Buffon.

by bringing forth their living young, (such are called *viviparous*.)

Time itself would fail, before it were possible to enumerate the manifold instances of divine art, which are displayed in the figure and make of animals, and to shew how well these are adapted to their different modes of life. How surprising the armour, with which they are clad, either for offence or defence? With what amazing skill do they construct their cells and habitations? But that man must be lost to all rational reflection and ingenuity of mind, who does not discern and acknowledge the workmanship of God, in the various instincts, with which the animal creation is endowed. I shall only adduce one instance out of many thousands; which is, the migration of birds from one country to another, according to the varying seasons of the year. What induces numbers of these, to cross over widely extended seas? and how do they know that they shall ever reach the land? How come they to steer their course aright to their several destinations; which before the compass was invented, would hardly have been attempted by the most skillful mariner? And what makes them ascertain the precise time of taking their different flights*? This is so remarkable a circumstance, that it is quoted by an

* The same remark is applicable to fishes.

antient prophet, to upbraid the stupidity of his countrymen *, *Yea, the stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed time; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people knoweth not the judgments of the Lord.*

Another suprising instance of providence is visible, in keeping up an exact balance among the numberless tribes of creatures, which live upon this earth. For; were the smallest to multiply beyond bounds, there would not be a sufficiency of food for the larger. And were the larger, numerous in proportion to their size, especially such as are of the ravenous kind, they would soon annihilate and destroy the breed of the weaker. But by a just proportion between the increase of all animals, and the length of their lives, the world is kept abundantly furnished with inhabitants, but not overstocked. Which verifies our Saviour's declaration, that the most inconsiderable creature, even a † *sparrow*, *doth not fall to the ground without our heavenly father.* Life could not be preserved among such a number of creatures, were not one part of them to live upon another, and the weaker become food for the stronger. If all animals lived upon vegetables, the quantity of their provisions would soon fail.

* Jer. viii. 7.

† Matt. x. 29.

Therefore, owing to a wise constitution in nature, one animal supports another; and thus all take up less room than they would do, by living on the same food. To make use of a familiar comparison, “a greater number of people may be crowded into the same place, if each is made to bear his fellow on his shoulders.”

But some men will say, for what end were so many creatures brought into being, since among many thousand species, there is scarcely one hundred which contributes to the benefit of man? Such questions as these, too often originate from ignorance and pride, rather than from a desire of information. He that made us, hath made us capable of investigating as many final causes of his procedure, as may conduce to our present and future happiness; tho’ in the words of * Job, *these are only parts of his ways, yet how little a portion is heard of him?* I have already observed, that the great and primary end, for which every creature was brought into existence was, that it might enjoy a suitable portion of happiness†. But still it may be said, are all animated beings capable of happiness, and if they are, what portion of it can they enjoy? There is a happiness, of which we ourselves partake in common with

* Job xxvi. 14.

† See page 64.

every living thing. Yea it is the greatest of all temporal blessings, and to which every thing else is subservient. For this reason, the universal parent hath bestowed a portion of it upon all creatures, whom he hath endowed either with a sensitive or rational soul. And this is nothing but *health*. Where this first of all blessings is wanting, sublunary pleasures of every kind sicken and lose their relish; but where health flows with a free and uninterrupted current, misery will scarcely find admittance. And this may be the aggregate of happiness to millions of animated beings*.

I come now to the last and noblest subject of my survey, viz. man.

There is not another creature, upon its first being sent into life, which appears more helpless than man. Incapable to relieve or assist himself, the infant's early cries and tears indicate the troubles to which he is born. This constitution of providence is wisely intended to teach us gratitude to, and dependence upon our heavenly father, who manifests his superior regard to man, in the methods by which he rears him, and in the watchful care which he exercises over him, especially when he enters on the early and slippery

* Mr. Paley remarks, that oysters and cockles can have no happiness but health. Mor. and Politic. Philos.

paths of life. The * Psalmist observes that *we are fearfully and wonderfully made*; and indeed our very bodies bear the strongest marks of divine wisdom, and of kind intention. But what distinguishes man from every other creature upon earth, is, his being endowed with such superior capacities of body and mind, that by the exercise and improvement of these, he can rise above the whole of the inferior creation, and attain to such accomplishments in knowledge and wisdom in this life, as to qualify him for a future state of endless and consummate bliss. To illustrate the superiority of man over every other animal. I shall give his portrait, as drawn by one of the first writers of this age†. ‘Strength and majesty belong to the man; grace and softness are the peculiar embellishments of the other sex. In both, every part of their form, declares their sovereignty over other creatures. Man supports his body erect; his attitude is that of command; and his face which is turned towards the Heavens, displays the dignity of his station. The image of his soul is painted in his visage; and the excellence of his nature, penetrates thro’ the material form in which it is inclosed. His majestic port, his sedate and resolute step, announce the nobleness of his rank. He touches the earth

* Ps. cxxxix. 14.

† Buffon’s Nat. Hist.

‘ only

‘ only with his extremity, and beholds it as at a
‘ disdainful distance. His arms are not given him
‘ as to other creatures for pillars of support ; nor
‘ does he lose, by rendering them callous against
‘ the ground, that delicacy of touch, which fur-
‘ nishes him with so many of his enjoyments.
‘ His hands are made for very different purposes ;
‘ to second every intention of his will, and per-
‘ fect the gifts of nature. When his soul is at
‘ rest, all the features of his visage seem settled
‘ in a state of profound tranquillity. Their pro-
‘ portion, their union and harmony, seem to mark
‘ his sweet serenity of mind, and give a true infor-
‘ mation of what passes within. But when the
‘ soul is excited, the human visage becomes a
‘ living picture ; where the passions are expressed
‘ with as much delicacy as energy ; where every
‘ motion is designed by some correspondent fea-
‘ ture, where every impression anticipates the
‘ will, and betrays those hidden agitations, which
‘ the man would often wish to conceal.’

To all the noble powers of man, his Creator
hath superadded the faculty of speech. . This is
denied to the brute creation, not for want of pro-
per organs, but for want of ideas, and a connected
train of thought. There is a unity and uniformity
of operation among each of the animal tribes, and
one soul seems to actuate the whole ; whereas
every

every individual among the human race has a mind and genius of his own, which he may exercise in a thousand different ways. And the scriptures declare, * that *there is a spirit in man*, and the inspiration of the *Almighty giveth him understanding*. Among other instances of divine wisdom and benevolence apparent in man, I must take notice, of that difference of countenance, of voice, and of hand writing, without which distinctions, society could not possibly subsist. But the goodness of God is not only manifested in our formation, but likewise in the methods by which he supports us in life and being. He allows us to be surrounded with many evils, to call forth our virtues, and exercise our talents; but his invisible arm still supports us in our journey thro' life. As to the precise time, when his wisdom shall think fit to call us off the present stage, he hath in great mercy cast a veil around this event; that we may always be found prepared for this awful change, and not anticipate the horrors of it, till we shall be speedily delivered from them. And yet death, the great destroyer of man, is constantly pursuing us at the heels, tho' he conceals himself from our view under a multiplicity of different garbs. We need not wonder then to see

* Job xxxii. 8.

one man die so young, the greater wonder is, to see another live so long.

Having now in several instances, remarked the difference betwixt man and every other animal, it might be expected, that I should take notice of the difference of one part of mankind from another, and mention some of those striking varieties which obtain among the human race. The subject I own is curious, tho' unedifying. The great differences among men arise from the colour of their skin, and peculiar conformation of some parts of their bodies. Many learned and ingenious men have endeavoured to account for these variations, from the influence of climate, food, and manners*. But I hope the reader will excuse me, when I tell him, that all the theories which I have had an opportunity of perusing, are far from being satisfactory, as not being supported by well authenticated facts†. How, or when this difference of complexion, &c. took place among our species, is one of those grand secrets in the kingdom of providence, which human ingenuity will never probably be able to unfold. But there are strong arguments to prove that all mankind are descended from one pair. It seems to be an established law of nature, that

* Antient Univerf. Hist.
Man.

† See Home's Sketches on

animals which can procreate together, and their progeny procreate also, are always of the same species. Now this is the case, among mankind of all colours and climates whatever. It is likewise proved by the dissection of human bodies, that among the whole species, their leading and constituent members and parts are identically the same. Farther, that ** God hath made of one blood, all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth,* appears from this consideration, that whereas other animals, can only subsist in certain climates, man is born to be an inhabitant of the world at large, and the temperature of his blood, is much the same on the coast of Greenland, as amidst the burning sands of Africa.

Having now finished my review of the earth, and pointed out the many advantages of our situation upon it, I shall conclude this lecture with a beautiful reflection of a writer already cited†.

‘ The earth alone of all the elements around us,
 ‘ is no where found an enemy to man. The body
 ‘ of waters deluge him with rains; oppresses him
 ‘ with hail, and drown him with inundations.
 ‘ The air rushes in storms, prepares the tempest,
 ‘ or lights up the volcano; but the earth gentle
 ‘ and indulgent, and ever subservient to his wants,
 ‘ spreads his walks with flowers, and his table

* Acts xvii. 26.

† Goldsm. Animat. Nature.

‘ with

‘ with plenty ; and returns with interest every
‘ good committed to her care. Tho’ she pro-
‘ duces the poison, she still supplies the cure ; tho’
‘ constantly teized more for the luxuries, than
‘ necessaries of man, she continues her kind indul-
‘ gence, and when life is over, she piously covers
‘ his remains in her bosom.’

O

L E C.

LECTURE IV.

GENESIS ii. 15.

And the Lord God took the Man, and put him into the Garden, to dress it, and to keep it.

OF all the branches of human learning, history is the most pleasing, the most instructive and useful: but among all the subjects, which fall within the province of history, that of *Man* justly claims the preference. By studying man, we learn to know ourselves, (a knowledge replete with the greatest advantages) and become best acquainted with our Maker, because in man his own image, we have the clearest exhibition of divine wisdom and benevolence.

Many characters have appeared upon the stage of human life, who have attracted the attention of their cotemporaries, and likewise of future ages, and have rendered their names illustrious from what they have done for their country, their friends, and their connections: but we are now to enter upon the history of a man, whose character is the most singular to be met with upon record,
and

and whose conduct has affected not only a part, but even the whole of his own species. I mean Adam the primogenitor of the human race.

That providence which watcheth over the concerns of men, hath preserved from an universal wreck of historical knowledge, such memoirs of our first parents, and of their early transactions, as are of the greatest moment to their posterity to be acquainted with. But these memoirs can only be found in the writings of Moses. He was the only inspired author, who professedly handled this subject; and it would be highly unreasonable to suppose, that a fuller revelation concerning Adam and Eve was afterwards made to any of the sacred writers, whether prophet or apostle. But here, a question naturally occurs, if no other person but Moses wrote the history of our first parents, whence happens it, that so many doctrines and opinions concerning them, and their primordial state, have been obtruded upon the world, as articles of religious faith? for it is clear, many of these doctrines and opinions are not to be found in any part of the writings of that historian. This may be partly accounted for from a propensity in mankind to indulge their own imagination, and *to become wise above what is written*; but it is chiefly to be imputed to partial and mistaken views of revelation; as will appear from

the following remark. Adam being the representative of all mankind, his conduct and character are frequently mentioned by the sacred writers, with a view to draw pious and moral reflections from both, for the benefit of his posterity. The Apostle Paul sometimes makes a contrast between him and Christ, and often adduces different parts of his history, by way of metaphors and comparisons to illustrate the subjects under his consideration. Now, * all these figures, these metaphors and illustrations, have been collected by divines, and digested into systems, as if they had been literal and real descriptions of the state and condition of our first parents. The account which Moses gives of them, contains only a few simple facts; yet these very facts are the only features, by which we can judge of the originals. We shall therefore attempt to review this part of oldest history, and cautiously guard against drawing any theories from it, but such as the words of the historian seem to justify.

We have heard, that *the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden*. These words plainly indicate, that Adam was not created within the precincts of Paradise; and it is afterwards said, upon his being turned out of the garden,

* See this proved in one instance. Lect. II. page 53.

* *He was sent to till the ground whence he was taken.*

Learned men have laboured to find out the situation of Paradise, which seems to be but a vague and uncertain inquiry; for the Mosaic description of it, will not suit any place on the present globe. He mentions two rivers in its vicinity, viz. Pison and Gihon of which no vestiges can now be found. The other two still remain, viz. the Hiddekel supposed to be the Tigris, and the Euphrates, whose streams unite together at a considerable distance above the Persian Gulph; in some part of which, it is highly probable, the happy garden once lay †; this Gulph is Eastward both of the land of Midian and the wilderness of Sinai; in one of which places Moses wrote his history. But since the formation of this earth, it has undergone great changes from earthquakes, inundations, and many other causes. The garden, however, seems to have been a *peninsula*, for the way or entrance into it is afterwards mentioned. We are told that *a river went out of it*; which according to some, should be rendered, *run on the outside of it*, and thus gave it the form of a horse shoe: for had the Euphrates run thro' the middle of the garden, one half of it would have been

* Gen. iii. 23.

† See in Lect. VI. the curse upon the ground.

useless to Adam, without a bridge or boat wherewith to have crossed it.

It is said by Moses, when God had finished the work of creation, ** he saw every thing which he had made, and behold it was very good.* From these words, we may infer, that all creatures were at first formed in the highest degree of perfection of which their natures were at that time susceptible. Doubtless therefore, Adam was created in the prime of his life, with all his powers and faculties in the highest degree of strength and vigour. His body would be graceful, and well proportioned; while his countenance was comely, and glowed with all the lustre of youthful innocence. The poet thus describes our first parents:

- ‘ Adam the goodliest man, of men since born
- ‘ His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.
- ‘ ——— for in their looks divine
- ‘ The image of their glorious Maker shone.’ MILTON.

Many have entertained an opinion, that Adam was created an adept in knowledge and in science, a consummate philosopher, and an accomplished divine. But the very reverse of this must be true, providing we give credit to the account which Moses gives of him. If Adam was created with intuitive knowledge, for what end was he endowed

* Gen. i. 31.

*The inference does not seem exactly with
respect to the immediate to the day
but a very young & full formed
man from the perfection of his mind
as a creature created*

with the senses of a man, thro' which, ideas might be conveyed to his mind, and make him capable of such improvements as arise from experience and observation? And if he originally possessed such a fund of valuable knowledge, why had he such an ardent thirst for an unwarrantable portion of more, and for the sake of this additional pittance forfeited his happiness and life? Besides, if Adam was at first all light and knowledge, and was soon after reduced to a state of ignorance and error, this transition would make a retrograde in the system of nature, quite dissimilar to that uniformity, which obtains throughout the whole of the divine government and œconomy*. For as I have already remarked†, it is an established law in the constitution of providence, that all creatures arise from small beginnings, and by a slow and gradual progression ascend to higher degrees of maturity and perfection. Yea it is said of our Saviour, that † *he increased in wisdom and in stature*. And in his own words, his religion

* See this beautifully illustrated in the Bishop of Carlisle's *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, a book which every man will peruse with pleasure and advantage, who wishes to have the clearest view of those dispensations of religious light, which God hath communicated to the world; and which light ever has been, and ever will continue to be, *shining more and more unto the perfect day*.

† Page 47.

‡ Luke ii. 52.

* *at first was like a grain of mustard seed, but it was to grow up to a large tree.* Moses introduces our first parents into life in the most natural manner, as having capacities to acquire knowledge, senses to receive impressions from objects around them, and a sufficient degree of reason to form a judgment of the things perceived: yet all these faculties can only be considered as so many instruments, by the exercise of which, they might be enabled to discharge the duties of their future life.

Before I enter upon the subsequent history of Adam, I shall present the reader with his portrait, when first coming into life, as it is drawn by a very masterly hand†. ‘Let us (says this ingenious writer) suppose a man in the same situation, with him who first received existence, a man whose organs were perfectly formed, but who was equally new to himself, and to every object which surrounded him. Were he to give a history of his thoughts, and of the manner, in which he received impressions, he might give some such information as this. I remember the moment when my existence commenced. It was a moment replete with joy, with amazement and anxiety. I neither knew what I was, where I was, nor whence I came. I opened

* Mark iv. 31.

† Buffon's Nat. Hist.

‘ my eyes. But what an amazing increase of
‘ sensation ! The light, the celestial vault, the ver-
‘ dure of the earth, the transparency of the waters,
‘ gave animation to my spirits, and conveyed
‘ pleasures, which exceed the powers of expres-
‘ sion. At first I believed that all these objects
‘ existed within me, and formed a part of myself.
‘ When turning mine eyes to the sun his splendor
‘ overpowered me. I voluntarily shut out the
‘ light, and felt a small degree of pain. During
‘ this moment of darkness, I imagined that I had
‘ lost the greatest part of my being. I was then
‘ roused with a variety of sounds. The singing of
‘ birds, and the murmuring breezes formed a
‘ concert, which excited the most sweet and in-
‘ chanting emotions. I listened, and was con-
‘ vinced, that these harmonious sounds existed
‘ within me.—I made a step forward, and after-
‘ wards renewing my motion, I walked with my
‘ face turned towards the Heavens ; till I struck
‘ against a palm tree, and felt some degree of
‘ pain. Seized with terror, I ventured to lay my
‘ hand upon the object, and perceived it to be a
‘ being distinct from myself, because like touch-
‘ ing my own body, it did not give me a double
‘ sensation. I resolved then to feel every object
‘ I saw, and had a strong desire to touch the sun ;
‘ but stretching out my hands to embrace the

‘Heavens, they met without any intermediate object. All objects appeared to me equally near, and it was not till after many trials, that I learned to use my eye as a guide to my hand. At last the train of my ideas was interrupted, and I lost the consciousness of my existence. My sleep was profound, but having no mode of measuring time, I knew nothing of my duration. When I awakened I was astonished to find by my side another form, perfectly similar to my own. I conceived it to be another self, and instead of losing by my sleep, I imagined myself to be doubled. I ventured to lay my hand upon this new being. With rapture and astonishment, I perceived that it was not myself, but something much more glorious and desirable.’

This philosophical detail, is so far from contradicting any part of Moses’s history, that it rather establishes its veracity; for it plainly appears from his account, that excepting what portions of knowledge Adam might acquire by the exercise of his senses, his Maker taught him every thing that was necessary for his comfort and subsistence. But before the Almighty gave any instructions to our first parents, we must suppose he inspired them with the knowledge of the meaning of every word which they heard him speak; otherwise it would have

have been impossible, that he could have had any such communication with them. The words which they heard, and were made to understand, being imprinted upon their memories, would serve as the foundation of a language, which they would afterwards increase and enlarge, as new objects began to multiply, and hence give rise to new terms and definitions.

Thus it appears, that the Almighty treated our first parents upon their entrance into life, as a tender hearted parent treats the fruit of her womb. He not only provided for them, but likewise instructed them in the use of, such things as might promote the health of their bodies, and future improvement of their minds.

And as exercise is so necessary for health and animal spirits, we are told, that *Adam was put into the garden to dress it, and to keep it.* The pleasure he would find in rearing his flowers and his plants, in arranging them according to his taste, and in clearing the ground of weeds, would make his labour sit easy upon him, and instead of its being a toil, it would become one of the comforts of his life. One of the first lessons taught to Adam by his infallible director, would be the necessity of food for the support of his life. Accordingly Moses informs us, that for this purpose a grant was made him to eat of every tree of

the garden, excepting one. At the same time it was made known to him, in what manner he was to repair the decays of nature ; namely, by eating of *the tree of life*. Then, in order to qualify him for social intercourse, he was ordered to exercise his faculty of speech, by giving names to different creatures. The author of the book of Ecclesiasticus says of our first parents, * *They received the use of the five operations of the Lord ; and in the sixth, he imparted to them understanding ; and in the seventh, speech to interpret the cogitations thereof*. The meaning cannot be, that he gave them every word they were to pronounce, more than every idea, which their senses were to convey to their understanding. Our talents and the exercise of them, may be both said to be given us of God ; but whatever capacities we receive from him, it is supposed that we ourselves must improve them, before we can attain to any acquirements whatever. Altho' Adam had heard and understood the words of God, yet Moses does not give the least hint, that he ever attempted to speak before this time. For if he had, as some imagine, innate knowledge and proper terms for every thing presented to him, what occasion was there to bring animals before him, to see what names he

* Ecclesiast. xvii. 5.

would

would impose upon them. Some writers have endeavoured to turn into ridicule the whole of this transaction, and have asked, how could all creatures upon earth appear at one time before Adam: not only one, but many days would have elapsed before he could give each a name? But this objection arises from not understanding the words of Moses. * What our translators render *to see what he would call them*, is in the original *to see what name he would call It. And whatsoever Adam called It*, viz. the living creature, *that was the name of It*. The meaning is no more than this, God brought a few creatures to Adam, to make him try to name them, and whatever he called any of them, that continued to be its name. And no doubt he would denominate every animal before him, from its external appearance, from its size, its colour, or its voice. And in process of time, he would give names to all those creatures which providence brought within his view, or with which he became afterwards acquainted.

The next thing in which God instructed Adam, tho' probably in a trance or vision, was his near relation to Eve, as being part of his own body. This piece of knowledge was imparted to him, in order to cement the greater love and affection

* See Shuckford on the Creation and Fall.

between the two, during the remaining period of their lives. If Adam was a real man, he could have no ideas but what external objects conveyed to his mind thro' the medium of his senses: for tho' the mind can compare and combine, yet it cannot create ideas, nor form any, but from the perceptions of its own operations, and the objects of sense. Now, Adam could have no ideas of parents and children, nor any such relation, because there were as yet, no objects of the kind from which he could receive them. Neither could he know that the union of man and wife was to be perpetual, *i. e.* as lasting and inseparable as the union of parts in the same body, which nothing but dissolution or death can part asunder, and which is intimated by these words, *They shall be one flesh*. Therefore the institution of marriage, must have been an express revelation from God, and as such given by him with a view to promote the happiness of our first parents, and of their posterity after them. And lastly, he enjoined Adam to observe the day after his creation as a day of rest, that his mind might acquire some farther degrees of strength, before it was employed about wordly concerns. He would understand from the words of the institution, that this day was ever after to be set apart for the purposes of piety and devotion; the benefit of which he would
expe-

experience, by enabling him to retain his innocence, and secure the favour and direction of his heavenly guide.

These, according to Moses, are all the transactions in which our first parents were interested, during their abode in Paradise, till they lost their innocence, and forfeited the enjoyments of their happy situation. And nothing can be more evident, than that the instructions which they received, bespoke the infantile state of their minds; tho' there is no doubt but further and higher dispensations of knowledge would have been communicated to them, as they became able to bear them, and had their minds matured by experience and reflection.

I shall now bestow some remarks on these two singular trees, which were said to be planted in the garden, and distinguished from the rest, as having different and opposite qualities. The one is called the *tree of life*, and the other the *tree of knowledge*. Various reasons are assigned for giving such a name to each.

It is thought the *tree of life* was so called, from its being of a medicinal quality, and having a supernatural virtue of promoting health and life, and warding off the attacks of weakness, sickness, and death. The Apostle John * mentions it in

* Rev. ii. 7. Chap. xxii. 2. 14.

this light, and introduces it as an emblem of the celestial beatitude. And surely it was as easy for God, to create a tree in the early world, whose fruit would give a continuance of health and life, as to make a number of plants and trees, which afterwards could restore a sickly constitution, and be the means of prolonging life for many years.

Others are of opinion that the tree of life was no more than a sign or symbol of that immortality which God would have bestowed upon Adam, if he had always retained his innocence: and that the continuance of his life would not have been owing to the fruit of this tree, but to his obedience to the laws of God. Just as the children of Israel in the Wilderness were cured of the bites of venomous serpents, by looking on the * *brazen serpent*: not by any virtue in the figure itself, but by God thus rewarding this act of their faith and obedience.

The other remarkable tree is called, *the tree of knowledge of good and evil*; tho' probably its name before the fall was nothing more than the *forbidden tree*. Why the knowledge of good and evil was annexed to it, is hard to say. It was enough if Adam and Eve knew the meaning of the phrase, because none but they, were to be per-

* Numb. xxi. 9.

sonally concerned in it. In general, it is thought that the words imply, the knowledge of *good lost*, and of *evil incurred*. But it is probable that this is nothing but a peculiar idiom of the Hebrew language, and means * *pernicious or sinful pleasure*. It is commonly said that the prohibition against eating of this tree was only to serve as a test of Adam's obedience, and therefore was purely positive. But I would observe, that tho' positive laws are of an arbitrary nature, and are founded in nothing but the will and pleasure of him who makes them, yet as the will of God is always directed by his wisdom and benevolence, we may take for granted, that he never gave a law or institution of any kind, but where the great object of it was the happiness of his creatures. And as he made a grant to man of every green herb, and the fruit of every tree for food, it is highly probable, that he never would have prohibited him from eating any fruit or plant, but such as were dangerous to his health, and hurtful to his constitution. Now, in such a collection of trees and plants as grew in Paradise, it is reasonable to believe, that some of these would be of a deleterious quality, and yet, as frequently happens, have a specious and beautiful appearance. But how

* Taylor's Scrip. Divin.

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could

could Adam, as yet without experience, be able to make a distinction? We may therefore warrantably infer, that he who provided nourishment for his children, would watch over them with parental care, during their inexperience and nonage, and point out to them, what kind of food might prove fatal to their health and life. The punishment denounced against disregarding his admonition, and violating his authority was awful indeed. But are not the most alarming threatenings of the divine law, denounced against the commission of those sins, which are most ruinous and hurtful to ourselves? And the words of the wise man, may be considered as a motto to every one of the divine laws, * *They that hate me love death.* Thus the righteous governor of the world hath from the beginning inculcated this doctrine, † *Obey my voice, for this is your wisdom and your understanding.*

But, as Almighty God, in the very constitution of his providence, hath inseparably connected our duty and our interest together, the command given to our first parents not to eat of the tree of knowledge, may be considered, not only as a caution to them, to guard against a thing which might prove fatal to their health, but likewise as a test of their obedience to, their implicit faith in, and

* Prov. viii. 36.

† Deut. iv. 6.

immediate dependence upon their Maker. Hence we are led to conclude, that all beings endowed with rational powers, when they are first sent into life, must pass thro' a state of trial and probation, before they can be confirmed in happiness and glory. God alone hath original perfection in his nature. Now, the very name of trial implies a possibility of standing or of falling. Accordingly we learn from revelation, that those superior beings, called angels, passed thro' a state of probation, during which, some of them * *kept not their first estate, but fell from their habitation, and are ever since held in chains of darknefs*. Adam's trial seems to have been well suited to the untutored state of his mind. He had as yet no temptation to transgress any part of what is called the moral law†. His whole duty and safety were comprehended in one command: and as the use of one tree was the infallible means of preserving his body, so the eating of another, was the only way by which he could violate the divine authority, and hurt both body and soul. And no other symbol could be so fit and proper as this; food being the only thing at present he stood in need of, which was already abundantly provided for him out of the fruits of the earth. Here then,

* Jude 6. † Archbishop King's sermon on the Fall of Man.

the Almighty acted the part of a skilful physician, who never prescribes a medicine above the strength of his patient, or rather of a wise and indulgent parent, who leads his young offspring by their senses, before their reason becomes improved by culture and experience. To us, who have been inured to trials of various kinds, it appears no hard or difficult command to abstain from eating of one or a few trees, when there were a multitude besides, more salutary and nourishing: but we should consider, that the same load which crushes one man, would sit light upon the shoulders of another. The trial of our first parents was doubtless easy, when compared with those trials which many of their posterity have undergone without forfeiting their integrity; but it seems it was equal to their strength, yea, and more than what they were able to bear.

It now remains, that I should consider the sanction, annexed to the divine prohibition, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

Much has been said and written about the nature of that death with which Adam was threatened, tho' God himself has explained the word death in the clearest and simplest manner, and told us that it means nothing more than * *dust*

* Gen. iii. 19.

returning again to the dust. Moses also has given us the very same idea of death, in that beautiful Psalm which bears his name, when he says, * *Thou turnest man to destruction, and says, return ye children of men,* i. e. to what you were, before I gave you existence. This was the first, and perhaps the only notion of death in the old world, when men rested their faith upon the word of God alone. But when the writers of the New Testament, especially the Apostle Paul, set themselves to prove the superiority of the Christian religion above the Mosaic, and to exhibit its nature and tendency in various points of view, they borrowed for this purpose a great number of images, metaphors, and similitudes, from the history of the creation, and of our first parents, both before and after their fall. And as death was an object of the greatest magnitude, they frequently introduced it, not only in its real and literal sense, but by way of figure to denote a state of guilt, and likewise of present and future misery. Now, divines taking these metaphorical descriptions for literal definitions, have maintained, that the threatening against Adam implied, death temporal, spiritual, and eternal. But it may be necessary here to remark, that there was another word used

* Ps. xc. iii.

by Moses, even before the creation of man, which is likewise introduced by the sacred writers, to convey every idea, which the term death conveys, I mean *darkness*. But when we read that * *darkness was on the face of the deep*. We should think it rather a harsh comment to be told, that the word meant darkness temporal, spiritual, and eternal. Darkness is a simple idea, and means the absence of light, and so is death, which implies the absence of life. I shall here quote the words of a great philosopher and divine, who has deserved well of the church of Christ, and whose name will always be revered where rational christianity prevails†.

‘ Some (says he) will have death to be a state of
 ‘ guilt, wherein not only Adam, but all his poste-
 ‘ rity was so involved, that every one descended
 ‘ of him deserved endless torment in hell-fire. I
 ‘ leave men to judge how far this is consistent
 ‘ with justice and goodness.’ (He might have said that this doctrine banishes every idea of God being either good, merciful, or just.) Then he adds, ‘ it seems a strange way of understanding a
 ‘ law, which requires the plainest and directest
 ‘ words, that by death should be meant eternal
 ‘ life in misery. Could any one be supposed to
 ‘ mean by a law, which says, *for felony thou shalt*

* Gen. i. 2.

† Locke’s Reasonabl. of Christianity.

‘ die, not that he should lose his life, but be kept
‘ alive in perpetual exquisite torments? There is
‘ yet, (says he) another harsher sense of *death*,
‘ viz. a state of sinning, and provoking God in
‘ every action we do. Then the sentence would
‘ be, Thou and thy posterity, shall be ever after
‘ incapable of doing any thing, but what shall be
‘ sinful and provoking to me, and shall justly
‘ deserve my wrath and indignation. Could a
‘ worthy man be supposed to put such terms upon
‘ the obedience of his subjects? much less can
‘ the righteous God be supposed, as a punishment
‘ of one sin, wherewith he is displeased, to put
‘ all men under the necessity of sinning conti-
‘ nually, and multiplying the provocation.’

But as death is a thing of the last importance to the whole of the human race, the spirit of God has adopted another word, to give us the truest notion of death, which we can possibly conceive, I mean, that of *sleep*. This word in all languages and books upon earth, has a fixed and definite meaning, viz. a temporary cessation of thought and voluntary action, which will be succeeded by a restoration to the exercise of every power and faculty of body and mind. But sleep in death has been understood by divines, as being *awake* either in a state of happiness or misery. Now may we not appeal to every man who can divest himself

himself of prejudice, if this be not a torturing of language, and using violence to the words of the divine spirit, which we should not so much as attempt to do to a profane writer? Some likewise maintain, that the body only sleeps, but others say that the soul sleeps also. Both in the eye of revelation appear equally absurd and improper. For sleep is a term which cannot be predicated of, nor will apply to any part of the man, but to the whole compound individual, and it is never otherwise applied by any one of the inspired writers, excepting perhaps in some parables or proverbial expressions.

But heathen philosophy, which has hitherto proved a most * dangerous friend to genuine christianity, has been called in to lend its aid to some of the above theories. When learning began to prevail among the Gentile nations, their philosophers *became wise in their own conceit*, and disregarding that knowledge which was level to the capacities of the vulgar, they soared above the region of common sense, and employed their superior talents in subtle disquisitions on the nature of essences, substances, and things of an abstract nature. Several of these philosophers wished well to the doctrine of a future state, and therefore

* See Dr. Priestley's *Corrupt. of Christianity*.

undertook to prove it by metaphysical reasoning, (tho' every christian must believe it a doctrine of pure revelation.) With this view, they maintained that one part of the man was the whole, viz. the *soul*; and that the body was nothing but a kind of vehicle for accommodating its noble inhabitant. Whereas there is nothing in nature more evident, than that man as well as every other creature of God, is a single unity or individual, consisting of a variety of parts and powers fearfully and wonderfully combined. An apostle says, * *there are many members in one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.* In like manner it may be affirmed of man, there are different parts which constitute his individuality. And the *body* cannot say to the *soul* I have no need of thee, nor the *soul* to the *body* I have no need of you. But our holy religion brings us better tidings than ever reason or philosophy could suggest, and assures us, that after death has destroyed the man, *He who is the resurrection and the life*, will once more reunite our component parts, so that man here, shall be man hereafter.

When treating on this subject, I cannot overlook a common deception, which gives men wrong notions of a state of death, and which is

* 1 Cor. xii. 20.

the great prop of religious and vulgar superstition in the world. I mean, applying time and portions of time to the dead in the same manner as to the living. Time is measured by a succession of our ideas. But there can be no ideas, where organs are wanting thro' which they can operate. Therefore we had no time, till God sent us into life, and when his infinite wisdom thinks fit to withdraw from us this blessing, time to us shall be no more, till restored again at the coming of Christ. I am well aware that doctrines which run counter to the prejudices of men are always ingrateful, but I must observe, that truth, especially religious truth, when imbibed into an honest heart, never fails to afford inward pleasure and comfort. And what reflection can solace the pious and good man when labouring under the attacks of mortality and death, equal to the well grounded hopes of *his redemption drawing nigh*, and that when death has sealed his eyes, then in a moment in the * *twinkling of an eye* he shall see his judge descending in the clouds of Heaven to bestow upon him a crown of celestial glory? Or can any thought fill the heart of the obdurate sinner with greater dread and terror, than that in an instant of time, after his departure from life, he shall hear pro-

* 1 Cor. xv. 52.

nounced by that Saviour who came to save him, his final, his awful, and eternal doom*.

Some have objected to the truth of revelation, because Adam did not die, on the very day on which he eat the forbidden fruit. But the words of the threatening are indefinite, and they may be rendered, *In dying thou shalt die*, or, *thou shalt utterly and entirely die*. The Apostle Paul acquaints us that Adam was under a law making death the penalty of his sin; therefore in the eye of the law, he died the moment he transgressed. The threatening does not so much point at the time he should die, as at the demerit of his transgression.

† The voice of law is uniformly the same, let the sinner die. Law declares the justice of the punishment, yet the execution of the sentence is still in the power of the lawgiver, and he may mitigate or suspend it as he thinks proper. Were not this the case, there would neither be pardon with God or man. An apostle declareth‡, that the *letter*, meaning of the law, *killeth*, or destroys the sinner, by subjecting him to a total extinction of life; *but the spirit*, or in other words, the con-

* The scripture notion of death is delineated in a very clear and judicious manner by Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, in his Appendix to *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*.

† See Taylor's Scrip. Divin. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

stitution of grace under a Redeemer, *quicken*s, or makes alive, by restoring man to his being, and bestowing upon him eternal life. Death in the very nature of things, must be the punishment of habitual sin, because it is not consistent with the character of a just and holy being, to continue the blessings of life to a creature, who perseveres in abusing his goodness, and trampling upon his laws.

There is a remarkable observation, which Moses makes upon our first parents, when in Paradise. He says, * *They were both naked, the man and the wife, and were not ashamed.* Some think these words were inserted from a marginal note, as they have no connection with what goes before or follows after. If we take the expression as implying bodily nakedness, they convey rather a gross idea: for as none beheld them but their Maker whom they had never yet offended, what occasion had they to be ashamed for want of clothes? But as *nakedness* in scripture, often means no more than being fully exposed to view, and the word *ashamed*, is often rendered *confounded* or *destroyed*; taking the words in this sense, their meaning is obvious, and perfectly coincides with what follows after: and it is this, 'Tho' they were now in the immediate

* Gen. ii. 27.

presence of God, so as to hear his voice, and perhaps behold his glory, they were not confounded. They did what none of their posterity could ever after do, *they saw the face of God and lived.*

Having now reviewed every thing mentioned by Moses which was said to, or done by our first parents, during their innocence, I shall briefly recapitulate such parts of the above discourse, as are likely to give us the most striking display of wisdom and goodness, in that constitution, under which their Maker placed our first parents, upon their appearance in life.

In the formation of their bodies, and endowments of their minds, he distinguished them as his peculiar favourites, from every other creature which he had made. He gave to other creatures, certain instincts or principles within themselves, to direct the whole of their motions and actions, but he took *man* under his immediate care and tuition. Yet, tho' he bestowed upon him superior powers and talents, he did not give him such an unerring beam of understanding as was sufficient of itself, to lead him thro' the paths of life. It is a height of wisdom, not compatible to an inhabitant of this world, to be self sufficient, so as to be his own guide. The supreme director of the world, and of every creature in it, always keeps the reins of government in his own hands. If
Adam

Adam wanted instruction, it was enough that he could find it, whenever he had occasion for it. This privilege alone gave him a singular advantage over his posterity; who, amidst all their schemes and notions, have no security against their falling into error and disappointment*. To Adam omniscience was his guide, and while he submitted to it, he could not err. This was not only an honour, but an inestimable benefit, to find knowledge without the trouble of acquiring it. *God alone is the light of our souls*, and while we *walk in his light*, we walk in safety and security; as was the case with Adam, till he forfeited the divine favour by his transgression.

Tho' it was fit and necessary, that our first parents should undergo a state of trial, yet the divine goodness manifests itself, in the nature of the trial prescribed to them. God gave them in charge their own health and life, and placed them in Paradise, which was exquisitely furnished with the means of supporting both. And lest their inexperience might lead them into danger, he carefully pointed out to them what he knew would be attended with fatal consequences. As it was necessary and fit to try their obedience, and inure them to an habitual dependence upon himself,

* King on the Fall.

he required of them nothing that was arduous or difficult, but only to follow and practise such things as were conducive to their own happiness: and thus he drew them to their duty with * *the bands of a man, and with the chords of love*. But as man is endowed with freedom of will, nothing can make him happy, which is forced upon him against his own choice. Therefore free and voluntary obedience is necessary upon our own account, as well as to secure the favour of God. Thus, Adam had an opportunity of enjoying happiness and life, without feeling the least constraint upon his will. All that was required of him, was *to hear and obey* the voice of his Maker.

Lastly, when God even annexed the awful sanction of death to the violation of his law, a beam of goodness, shone through this dark cloud of judgment. We cannot doubt, but in this threatening, omniscience had a view to a future constitution which would answer many good purposes to mankind, when reduced to a state of sin and misery. Death is stiled the king of terrors, therefore the natural aversion which men have to encounter this last enemy, makes them more cautious of throwing away their lives before the appointed time. Death increaseth the vanity of all

* Hosea xi. 4.

earthly things, and so abateth their force to tempt and delude; it induces us to be moderate in gratifying the appetites of a corruptible body. It interrupts the influence of pernicious example, and brings, within narrower bounds, the range of tyranny and ambition. Death serves as a terror to restrain men from violence and vice; and it excites them to make preparations for another world, as sensible they are daily hastening to it.

LECTURE V.

GENESIS iii. 8.

And they heard the Voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the Day: And Adam and his Wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the Trees of the Garden.

WE have already considered man in his primeval state, as he came from the hand of his Creator, without any infirmity of body or obliquity of mind; endowed with powers and faculties above any creature upon earth; and with capacities for such improvements in knowledge and obedience, as might have enabled him, to arrive at those degrees of maturity and perfection, for which he was originally intended. Had Adam been created with laws written upon his mind, or with a self sufficiency of wisdom within himself for all the purposes of life, he would have stood in need of no external revelations, nor of any instructions imparted to him by his Maker. But on the contrary, so long as he was guided by the word of God, he had a good understanding, and

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never erred in knowledge or in practice ; yet he no sooner followed his own counsels, and became a rule of conduct to himself, than he lost his innocence, and forfeited that happy situation of life which he had formerly enjoyed. In this respect, he was a true representative of many of his posterity, who spurning to live in subjection to their parents, and such as are capable of directing them, long to launch out into the world, and follow the devices of their own hearts ; but alas ! they afterwards find to their dear bought experience, what great advantages they have lost, and what irremediable evils they have incurred.

How long our first parents retained their innocence we are no where told. Many assert that they fell on the very first day of their creation. But Moses mentions so many transactions on that day, as must have ingrossed the whole of their attention, and prevented them from falling into such temptations as arise from indolence and want of reflection. Besides, if in such circumstances as they were placed, they could not refrain from an open violation of the divine law for the space of one day, it would bespeak a deceitfulness of heart in them, greater than in most of their posterity. It is somewhat singular, that many of the great trials recorded in sacred writing, were limited to forty days ; which in prophetic stile is sometimes equi-

equivalent to forty years. This appears from the history of Moses, of Elijah, of Nineveh, and of the Jewish nation after the death of Christ. And what is very remarkable, he, of whom Adam was a type, was tempted forty days in the wilderness. Agreeable to this part of the divine œconomy, perhaps the trial of our first parents lasted so long. However, that they remained for a considerable time in the garden, appears highly probable from this consideration, that their indulgent Creator who had manifested his tender concern for them while innocent, and extended his mercy to them when fallen, would never have turned them out of Paradise, and sent them into an uncultivated world, before they had acquired the arts of living, and were capable of providing against the vicissitudes of their future lot.

If we search into the origin of evil among rational creatures, we may trace it from their limited natures, and their being made with finite understandings. Original perfection belongs to God alone. The highest order of created intelligences, only *see in part and know in part*. Therefore partial knowledge may lead to error, and error to transgression and vice. Neither men nor angels can be confirmed in purity and happiness, till they are once confirmed in obedience to the divine laws, and removed beyond the reach of trial and

temptation. But nothing can be a greater proof of the frailty and fallibility of our primogenitors, than their being seduced by the very first temptation, which was thrown in their way.

The account which Moses gives us of this memorable transaction, is extremely brief and concise, and is only a narration of a few singular and extraordinary facts. The reason of his brevity may be this. We are not interested in the personal concerns of Adam, but only in the consequences of his transgression. And acquainting us with the source of the evil, is the most likely way for enabling us to search after, and to apply the proper cure.

The particulars of the fall are the following. Eve is deceived by the false suggestions of the serpent, and eats of the forbidden tree. She then prevails upon her husband to eat also of the same fruit. After this, they were seized with shame and fear, and hid themselves from the presence of God, among the trees of the garden. But their supreme judge calls the three culprits before him, and pronounces upon each a sentence adequate to the nature of their respective crimes.

Learned men have advanced many specious arguments to prove that the whole of this history, is nothing but an apologue, or allegory dressed up in the Eastern manner; in which the serpent repre-

represents lust or passion; the woman sensual pleasure; but they allow the man to be an emblem of reason. And in their opinion the purport of the whole is no more than this, that tho' there is a constant warfare between our rational and animal part, yet if we will only press forward, tho' we are sometimes defeated, at last we shall overcome. In answer to this, I shall make the following remarks. If the whole of this momentuous affair be an allegory, we can have no security in sacred writing, and must often be at a loss to judge, whether we are reading real history or an Eastern fable. But in my opinion, there is still a weightier consideration. We find it an invariable character of Moses as an historian, to be concise. He seemingly hastens thro' his relations, and crowds as many things as possible into the smallest bounds. Now, can we suppose him in this instance, seized with such an itch for allegorising, that he should employ a long chapter, by adding useless drapery to a plain and obvious truth, namely, * *that lust when it conceiveth bringeth forth sin*, and that † *the wages of sin is death*.

It is the opinion of a learned critic‡: That perhaps we enter sufficiently into the meaning and design of the historian, if we suppose a real serpent

* Ja. i. 15. † Rom. vi. 23. ‡ Dawson on Genesis.

in some measure or other, instrumental and accessory to the crime committed by the woman. The means and occasions of such thoughts and reasonings as fatally deceived her, being excited in her mind, and presented to her imagination, as if the serpent had carried on a literal conversation with her, and by fair speeches and specious arguments, prevailed on her to transgress the divine command.

Others maintain, that there was no real serpent concerned in the transaction, but that the devil obtained this name, by assuming the appearance of one of those good angels, who held converse with our first parents in Paradise, and were seen by them in the likeness of seraphs or fiery serpents. And, that the historian, having once adopted this name for the devil, proceeds throughout the whole detail, to characterise him by the qualities and condition of this reptile. What they think countenances this opinion, is an expression of an apostle, who says, * *Satan is transformed into an angel of light*, which they think alludes to this occasion. But had this been the case, it must in a great measure have extenuated the crime of our first parents, even supposing they had been much more matured in wisdom and experience, than

* 2 Cor. xi. 14.

they really were. If a herald at one time shews us a royal signature to establish his prince's decree, and we really believe, that the same person afterwards produces it, to reverse his former mandate; tho' we should be deceived, we ought rather to be pitied than condemned. Farther, tho' the scriptures inform us, of the agency of the devil in the minds of the disobedient, yet we have no clear and unquestionable authority from them to conclude, that this evil spirit ever visibly appeared to the eyes of men*.

For these and other reasons which might be assigned, the Christian world in general, have always looked upon Moses's account of the fall, as a real and literal history. It is certainly mentioned as such by the writers of the New Testament. Our Saviour says, *† Ye are of your father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning.* Paul expressly declares, that *‡ the serpent deceived Eve.* And another apostle saith, *§ the devil sinned from the beginning.* Therefore, taking for granted, that the story of the fall is literally true, I shall endeavour to illustrate it as such, and to shew that the whole transaction is consistent with the wisdom and goodness of Almighty God, and in

* If any think that our Saviour's temptation proves the contrary, they may consult Farmer on that subject.

† John viii. 44. ‡ 2 Cor. xi. 3. § 1 John iii. 8.

no wise repugnant to any part of that œconomy, which he hath established in his moral government of the world.

Moses says, *The serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.* Serpents are often quoted by writers for their craftiness and deceit ; yet it is a well known fact, that there are many beasts of the field, which greatly exceed them, both in sagacity and cunning. Therefore, what the historian here says of the subtilty of the serpent, could be nothing but the high opinion, which our first parents had conceived of this réptile ; because they had observed every other creature dumb, but itself. Here a difficulty occurs which is not easily removed, namely, how could this serpent speak ? Or is it consistent with the character of God, first to create a brute and irrational animal, and then metamorphose it into a rational being, endowed with the powers of reason and speech ? This I shall readily deny. But supposing the creature to remain the very same it was before, can we affirm, that it was above the power of an angel to influence its organs, and use them as a medium, thro' which sounds might be conveyed to the ear of Eve. In many instances we ourselves can exert an agency over the creatures beneath us, tho' they have intentions of their own distinct from ours. And why might not the
supreme

supreme governor of the world, for wise ends, tho' to us inscrutable, permit the agency of a powerful seraph, over the body of an inferior creature at one time, and never again think proper to permit a similar exertion of that angel's power? And tho' this opened a source of misery to the human race, yet when all the evil which arises from it has finished its course, the result of this part of the plan, may be the greatest possible good upon the whole, and a most useful and necessary display of the divine perfections to the whole of his intelligent creation.

It is not my business at present to enter into any argument with those who disbelieve revelation. I rest my faith solely upon its veracity; and take for granted that it is to revelation alone we stand indebted for every thing we know, relating to the invisible world. It informs us, that there was an apostacy among a higher rank of beings, stiled angels. It likewise suggests, that this apostacy was headed and conducted by one angel probably much superior in knowledge, craftiness, and power to all the rest. And indeed he must have been among his brethren *a son of the morning*, who was able to erect such an extensive kingdom in this world, and for such a long period, maintain his rueful sway in it, in opposition to the only

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begotten son of God: tho' we are assured, this illustrious being will at last despoil him of his power, and cast into outer darkness, both him and all his followers. The scriptures mention several remarkable things concerning this fallen angel.

1. They give him names characteristic of his temper and employment. Such as *fatan*; *the devil*; *the accuser of the brethren*; *the father of lies*; *the old serpent*; *the prince of the power of the air*, i. e. of all airy and vain powers; and such like. 2. They speak of no other evil angel, as any way employed in doing harm to mankind, by tempting and seducing them. For in the whole of sacred writing, the word devil or fatan is never once used in the plural number. What our translators render devils in the New Testament, is always in the original * demons, a word which signifies nothing more, than those imaginary deities which the heathens worshipped, and which they believed to be the souls of their departed heroes. 3. They inform us, that the power of this malignant spirit extends no farther in the creation, than to influence the minds of wicked men. Thus the Apostle calls the devil, † *the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*.

* Eph. ii. 2. † See Farmer on the Gosp. Demon.

Why Almighty God should permit a degraded spirit, to shed his baleful influence on any part of the human race; or why he should even allow wicked tyrants to flourish in this world, and be the instruments of violence and misery to others, is one of those secrets which are known to him alone. But as revelation acquaints us that this accuser of the brethren, is connected with bad men at present, and will receive his sentence and punishment with them at the judgment of the great day, it is not improbable, that his fall might be nearly cotemporary with that of our first parents. There is an expression of an apostle, which seems to countenance this opinion. He says, * *the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* What is rendered here their first estate, might be more properly translated their first principality or government †. From these words some conclude, that satan being one of the chief angels in Heaven, was delegated by his sovereign to be guardian of man, his chief creature upon earth. That angels are employed by God in the concerns of this world has been a received opinion among Jews and Gentiles from time immemorial, and is

* Jude 6.

† See Benson on Jude.

authorised by sacred writing. Now it seems this seraph envying the happiness of our first parents; and repining that his own situation was not more elevated, conceived some degrees of resentment against his Maker; but sensible that God was infinitely beyond the reach of his malice, he resolved to undo the glory of his workmanship, especially that part of it which bore his image. With this malevolent view, he casts about for a proper engine by which he might accomplish his direful scheme. At last he makes choice of a serpent, as a creature most nearly resembling himself, on account of its malignant and venomous quality. And here we see the goodness of their heavenly parent, in not permitting his frail children to fall into a greater temptation, than what they might have been able to bear. The visible agent employed to seduce them, was none of the highest order of the brute creation, but a low and groveling reptile: and whatever its rhetoric might have been, yet its appearance ought to have suggested to them a diffidence in complying with its advice, when desiring them to break a known and positive law of God.

Adam and Eve might not yet know whether any other creatures besides themselves were endowed with the faculty of speech, but now hearing a serpent pronounce words, they concluded
that

that it was the wisest and most subtle beast of the field which they had ever met with. This would excite their curiosity, and make them eagerly listen to what it said. And perhaps the evil spirit, could judge by some means or other, that Eve at this time was off her guard, and indulging some levity of mind; which made him embrace the opportunity of laying his snares before her. It is a truth which few will controvert, that there are particular times and seasons, when passion operates with violence: and that during these seasons men will be led to the commission of crimes, against the very thoughts of which, their minds would have at any other time revolted. Eve might now be gazing with a wishful eye upon the forbidden tree, and expressing to her husband a desire to taste its fruit. (For the history does not give the most distant hint, that she was alone.) However, it is highly probable, that before this circumstance happened, the great flow of health and animal pleasure which our first parents had hitherto enjoyed, might have excited some passions within their breasts, which by indulgence proved fatal to their innocence and virtue. The beginning of sin is often compared to the breaking out of water; whose motion at first is slow and scarcely perceptible, but which if long neglected, swells into an overflowing torrent.

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The serpent first attacks Eve, as being the weakest vessel, and the most likely afterwards to prevail upon her husband. His address to her seems to be an inference drawn from a conversation which had already passed between them. *Yea, bath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden.* One thing is evident throughout the whole of this transaction, that Moses always uses the name of the instrument, but never introduces the name of the agent; the reason may be this, our first parents could judge of a serpent by their senses, but they could form no idea of an invisible being. Many learned men are of opinion, that the conversation as here related, might not be the very identical words either of the serpent or of Eve in her reply to him: for every writer may describe the same occurrence in his own stile: it is sufficient if the sense and meaning be sacredly preserved. The question proposed by the serpent seems to be ambiguous, like those oracles which were afterwards given by his votaries. He wanted to know whether they were debarred from eating of every tree within the garden; at least Eve understood him so, when she answers, *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said,*

said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

The serpent replies, that the prohibition arose from nothing but jealousy in their Maker, otherwise he would have never been so severe and arbitrary as to threaten them with punishment, for doing a thing which he knew would redound to their advantage. He assured them, that eating of this fruit, instead of rendering them mortal, would be the means of *opening their eyes*, i. e. of discovering something new and valuable to them; for then *they should be as Gods or Angels, knowing good and evil*. To know good and evil is a phrase frequently used by the sacred writers, which implies all manner of knowledge. The woman of Tekoah said to David, * *As an angel of God so is my Lord the king, to discern good and evil*. Some are of opinion, that the serpent in the presence of Eve, did eat some of the fruit of the tree, before he accosted her, and then declared that his gift of speech, and superior knowledge above every beast of the field, was owing to the virtue of the tree. But the falsehood of his declaration might have been palpable to Eve, had she reflected, that a being who had given her, and her husband so many blessings, would not have with-

* 2 Sam. xiv. 17.

held another, if it had been so highly useful for them. However, what the serpent said was sufficient to overcome her virtue. A judicious writer draws the following reflection from this passage*,

‘ I can give no account, (says he) of the matter but this: When we are searching after the reason of things, (as Eve I suppose was of this prohibition) and cannot find it; if one be suggested to us, which never came into our mind before, tho’ in itself unlikely, we are ready to catch at it, and be pleased with it. For, when the mind is weary with inquiring, it is satisfied with a false reason, rather than have none.’

The woman thought that *the tree was good for food, because it was pleasant to the eye*. This forbidden tree was a fit emblem of vice. It pleases our senses, and promises happiness, when its consequences often entail upon us sorrow, shame, and death. But the most powerful argument for Eve’s seduction, was its being *a tree to be desired to make one wise*. She thought, that by eating of it she should be no longer under the restraints of divine authority, debarring her from choosing and acting as she listed, but that now, without any extraneous direction, she might possess within herself a stock of knowledge sufficient for all the purposes of life.

* See Patrick in Loc.

Whoever is acquainted with the disposition and inclinations of youth, must be sensible, that one of the first sources of their being corrupted, arises from a strong desire of becoming their own masters, and having it in their power to give a free range to their passions, and taste the pleasures of sense. Thus our first mother was in her younger years seduced, and deceived her husband, and by the like temptation her posterity daily fall. Accordingly, *she took of the fruit and did eat, and gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat.* Perhaps Eve upon eating of this fruit might be intoxicated, and become like one elevated with adventitious spirits. She might feel a temporary kind of pleasure, and make use of this as an argument with her husband to partake of such a delicious morsel. She would also alledge, that there was nothing of a deadly quality in the tree, for she was alive and happy. Adam in the mean time lost to reflection, and admiring the charms of his beautiful wife, resolved to share in her fate whatever it might be. The apostle's words hint so much when he says, * *Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.* We are then told, *the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.* This

* 1 Tim. ii. 14.

might be some time after, when cool reflection took place; for the words seem to allude to one awakening from a kind of delirium. *To open the eyes* in scripture stile, * implies not only the exercise of our natural sight, but seeing something to which we had never adverted before. Thus, † *God opened the eyes of Hagar, and she saw a well of water.* Not but the well was always in the same place, and her eye sight the same as formerly, but God in his providence directed her view to that spot. In like manner, after Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden tree, they discovered something new, but not what they expected to see, from the information of the serpent: for then they *knew*, and felt *that they were naked*. Surely, their shame could not arise from their bodily nakedness. A great critic observes ‡, ‘ When only two inhabited the world, their bed ‘ under the canopy of Heaven, was equally as ‘ chaste, as if it had been covered with a wall, or ‘ with tapestry and ceiling.’ *Nakedness* in scripture often means guilt. Thus, § *Moses saw the people naked.* Therefore the meaning of their being naked on this occasion, was no more than this, when passion subsided, and reason and reflec-

* Shuckford on the Fall. † Gen. xxi. 19.

‡ Le Clerc’s Dissert. on the Fall. § Exod. xxxii. 25.

tion took place, they were conscious of their guilt, of which they had no idea or feeling till now. Or in the opinion of others, they felt themselves affected with lust and irregular passions, which their reason was unable to curb; but so long as they were under the guidance of God, his power kept all their faculties in perfect order. Their mental or bodily nakedness had never given them concern, while they were covered with their innocence.

Moses then adds another circumstance as immediately connected with the preceding, *They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.* This very incident has been like many other parts of sacred writing turned into ridicule, and it has been asked, where could Eve find needles for this piece of work? * Some able and judicious critics are of opinion, that these words are an improper version of the original. The word translated *aprons* does not mean, what in common language bears this name; but any thing wherewith we inclose ourselves, or which is wrapt around us. And the word *sewed* ought to be rendered, *twined* or *twisted*. This then makes the sense natural and coherent, viz. they took fig leaves, probably along with the branches, and twisted them together as

* See Shuckford on the Fall.

foliatures or inwrapments, with which they covered or hid themselves. The Arabs and some people in the East, still use the same mode of making temporary booths.

After this, we are told, *They heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day.* The word *voice* means not only the sound of words spoken, but any noise whatever, and either sense may be applied, as the nature of the subject requires it. But as no words from the Lord are mentioned, till he called upon Adam, the word *voice* in this place may mean some sound or noise which our first parents heard, and which they understood as the usual signal or prelude to the approach of the Divine majesty. Several such indications of the Divine presence are mentioned in scripture. Thus the * *Lord passed by Elijah, first with a great strong wind, and afterwards with an earthquake.* And David † was to judge of the Divine presence drawing near, when *he heard a sound going in the top of the mulberry trees.* Adam is said to hear God's voice in the *cool of the day*; or as it may be rendered in the *wind of the day.* Some ingenious ‡ theorists are of opinion, that when the earth at first arose out of the water, it was divided into islands, (in one

* 1 Kings xix. 11. † 2 Sam. v. 24. ‡ Whitehurst. Subterr. Geogr.

of which Paradise lay) which afterwards became large continents, from the gradual subsiding of the water, and the operation of tides and winds. This expression, *the wind of the day*, seems to confirm this opinion. For it is well known, that in all islands surrounded by the ocean, the inhabitants are every day refreshed, by two winds which blow in opposite directions. In the morning the wind blows from the sea in every quarter upon the land, and in the afternoon it begins to blow in like manner from the land into the sea*.

Upon hearing the voice of God *walking* or gradually drawing nearer, and perhaps more awful and terrible than ever they had heard it before, *Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden*. Probably in one of these booths, wherewith they had already provided themselves. Nothing can more clearly demonstrate, their infant state of knowledge, and the grossness of their ideas, concerning the perfections of the supreme being, than their imagining, that they could hide themselves in a thicket from his all-penetrating eye,

* This is easily accounted for, from the difference of land and water, in receiving and conducting heat and cold. In proportion as the air, above either of these elements is rarefied, the incumbent atmosphere rushes into it, till the whole be brought to an equilibrium. This has been already remarked, as the general cause of winds. Page 71.

before whom * *Hell is naked, and destruction hath no covering.* Guilt always shuns that communion with God, which is the great comfort and security of innocence.

And the Lord called to Adam, as he did to † *Moses out of the bush*, and said unto him, no doubt with an awful tone, Where art thou? Why dost thou run into coverts like a wild beast, and imagine that thou can shun my presence? The question was asked, to awaken his guilty mind to a confession of his crime. *And he said unto him, I was afraid because I was naked.* Not surely meaning, his want of clothes, but his want of innocence, the best habit, and comeliest ornament of a rational soul. And the Lord said unto him, *Who told thee that thou was naked? Hast thou eaten of the forbidden tree.* And the man said, *the woman whom thou gavest to me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* These words suggest, that Eve had used some art to prevail on her husband. But this answer contains a tacit reflection, both on his Maker and on his wife. On his Maker, for giving him such a woman as had deceived him: and on Eve, for drawing him into such a temptation. Adam's behaviour on this occasion, has been exactly copied after by the greatest part of

* Job xxvi. 6.

† Exod. iii. 4.

his posterity. We are too ready to exculpate ourselves, by laying our faults to the charge of another, and are seldom at a loss for some apology for our own misconduct. But Adam's children have amply repaid him for this ungenerous treatment of their mother, for if he blamed her in one instance for a fault which he himself committed, many of them place to his account the whole of those errors and transgressions, of which they themselves are guilty.

And the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. She also like her husband, wanted to remove the blame from herself, and throw it upon another. When any of us are drawn into vice, we are never so much deceived by another as we are by ourselves; which was the case with Eve.

Having now endeavoured to throw some light on the account which Moses gives us of the introduction of sin and misery into the world; before I dismiss this subject, it may be expected, that I should take under my consideration some objections against the above theory of the fall; and also review some arguments which infidelity has made use of, wherewith to undermine revealed religion.

To

To some it appears incredible, that Almighty God should permit an evil and apostate spirit, to actuate the body of a brute creature, and make it carry on a conversation such as Moses relates it did, when revelation authorises no similar transaction, excepting what happened in a trance, a dream, or vision.

1. But to the above it may be replied, that our views both of the natural and moral government of God over this world, are limited and partial. We can only reason from what we know, to what we know not; and yield our assent, in proportion to the strength and reasonableness of the evidence which is laid before us. Now, as far as we can trace the works of God, there appears not only a unity of design, but likewise a harmony and connection throughout the whole; and all the different parts of the mighty machine have their *line*, their *weight*, and their *measure*. We see orders of beings beneath us which we can control, and employ many ways contrary to their natural dispositions. But can we say, that there are none above us, who exceed us in dignity and power, and may influence our actions, as much as we can influence the actions of many parts of the brute creation? That we do not see, hear, or converse with these beings is no argument to the contrary; because many creatures in a variety of instances,

instances, know as little of their connection with man; and yet feel the effects of his sagacity and power over them. It is next to an established maxim, which few enlightened minds will controvert, that the great governor of the world carries on the purposes of his infinite wisdom and goodness by the instrumentality of means; and wherever his own workmanship can accomplish the ends of his government, he never employs anything beside; that is, he never exerts an immediate act of omnipotent power.

It is to revelation we stand indebted, for such an extensive view of the moral government of God, as enables us to reconcile that part of it, which comes within our present reach, to the rectitude and equity of its great ruler. Now, it informs us of something, which analogy renders highly probable, viz. that those superior beings the inhabitants of the upper world, are employed by their sovereign in the concerns of men, and that *they are ministering spirits**, sent forth to minister for them who are the heirs of salvation. And is it not more than probable, that some of these would be employed to superintend, and minister to our first parents in their early and innocent state, especially as their inexperience stood so much in need of friendly direction?

* Heb. i. 14.

Upon the supposition then, that such a guardianship was committed to one of the highest seraphs, as a part of his trial and probation, why might not he fail in his duty and allegiance, in this instance as well as in any other, and be banished from his attendance on the divine presence? And if such an event took place, we may naturally conclude, that the fallen angel would try every art to involve Adam and Eve in a guilt similar to what he had himself contracted. We observe one of the ways of providence in this world, is permitting wicked men to seduce others, and fill up the measure of their iniquity, before they are called to a final account. And why might not this be the case with apostate angels? Why not grant a permission to the one as well as the other, under certain just and wise limitations? This part of the divine œconomy, at present to us is dark and mysterious, but it may at last display the glory of the great author of nature, when the whole plan shall be concluded, and all those whom he hath given to his own son, become * *meet for the inheritance among the saints in light*; while the wicked, whether they have been men or angels, shall go to the place prepared for them.

We need not be surpris'd, that since the fall the devil has no such power over the body of man

* Col. i. 12.

or beast as is then ascribed to him, because it was at that period that he received his sentence of degradation, and was stripped of his former pre-eminence and angelic lustre.

2. It has been said, Why did not the Almighty permit satan to tempt our first parents, as he has ever since tempted their posterity, by suggesting to their minds sinful desires and inclinations? But this objection is removed by considering those peculiar circumstances, in which the first of mankind were placed in the earliest period of their life. Had God written the whole of their duty upon their hearts, and given them a right judgment in all things, the natural way of tempting beings so constituted, would have been to permit a seducing spirit, to pervert their minds, and draw them into sin, by weakening the influence of their better sentiments. But if man was made only to receive knowledge thro' the information of his senses, and endowed with capacities to enable him how to judge and act, the conflict would have then been very unequal: neither would it have been suitable to the character of a just and equitable being, to allow a wicked spirit to possess the heart of a creature, before a sufficient stock of knowledge was planted in it, so as to be capable of judging, and distinguishing betwixt right and wrong. Tho' the evil

one may be permitted to catch away that which is sown in our hearts, it would not be fit that he should be permitted to possess the heart before any thing was sown in it, and make it impossible for the good seed to find a good soil. If Adam had one law, I mean that of abstaining from the tree of knowledge, which was not written upon his mind, this alone was a proof, that his duty was taught him by the mouth of God. And as he was to learn obedience by hearing, it was natural to suppose, that the temptation should also come by hearing.

3. Some are ready to ask, If Adam had never fallen, what would have been the state of this world, and the condition of his posterity? But such questions are the offspring of human vanity and presumption. And in such instances the words of Job are highly applicable*, *Vain man would be wise, tho' man be born like a wild asses colt.* To say what would have happened, if Adam had never sinned, is as great presumption, as saying, what would have enlightened this world if God had never created a sun. One thing is certain, that tho' Adam had stood, every one of his posterity were liable to fall, and consequently might have fallen; otherwise they would have had greater

* Job xi. 12.

perfection in their nature, than the highest order of created beings. It is the height of arrogance in creatures of such narrow and limited capacities, to canvass the ways of infinite wisdom, and rejudge the judgments of the most high. Reason, as far as we can carry its researches, confirms what revelation declares, that * *God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* With respect to him, *Whatever is, is right.* On this principle it becomes us with humility and reverence to contemplate the works of God, to search into the dispensations of his providence and grace to mankind, and learn the ends for which they were given, and the wisdom of communicating them in such times, and in such a manner, as best suited the circumstances of those for whom they were intended.

4. As to the time of sin making its first appearance in the world, we may rest satisfied, that infinite wisdom saw it the most fit, and attended with the fewest evils, natural and moral. Had not our first parents transgressed, till their minds were matured with knowledge and experience, their guilt would have been more aggravated, and their punishment more severe. Mercy might have then overlooked them, like the fallen angels. But as † *he who made them knew their frame, and remem-*

* Ps. cxlv. 17.

† Ps. ciii. 13.

bered them to be but dust, he pitied them as a father pitieth his children. Had such an event as the fall taken place, when mankind was increased and multiplied, it perhaps would not have suited the deep counsels of God, who intended to send his own son to be the Saviour of all men, and bring them at length out of all their evils to salvation. Could we unravel the great plan of providence we might see, that permitting sin to come into the world as Moses relates it, was the greatest instance of divine wisdom and goodness, not only in raising human nature to the highest degree of purity and perfection, to which it could attain, but likewise in contributing to the happiness of the whole of his rational creation, by establishing their sole dependence upon him, from such an illustrious exhibition of his amiable and adorable perfections.

5. I shall conclude this discourse with endeavouring to remove an objection, which I am aware will occur against a principal part of that theory which I have adopted; namely Adam's coming into the world without knowledge of any kind, but what he was to acquire from the use of his own senses, and such as was communicated to him by external revelation. Tho' Moses hath clearly proved this truth, yet men not satisfied with his authority, have maintained a doctrine quite the reverse

reverse. Namely, that God originally wrote his law on the heart of our first parents, and likewise on the hearts of all their posterity. To support this opinion, several texts of scripture are quoted, but particularly the following, * *That the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. That the Gentiles which have not a law are a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts.* Now, it is surely offering violence to any part of sacred writing to affix to it a sense, contrary to reason, to experience, and observation. Therefore the meaning of the above, and such like passages, can be no more than this, The heathens notwithstanding their immoral practices in other respects, were led by their conscience to practise and recommend many things contained in the moral law of God, which were as well known to them, as if they had been written in their hearts. But the question once more occurs, Whence did they derive this knowledge, whence their acquaintance with the law of God? Not from the light of their own minds, and the acuteness of their reasoning. Far less had they any inbred and innate knowledge of a God communicated to them in the act of their creation.

* Rom. i. 19. Ch. ii. 14.

Were this the case, that every man had the law of God originally written upon his heart, the savage ought to have it as well as the civilised, and in this respect the whole of the species ought to be equally enlightened. There have been instances of young children deserted in woods by their parents, who have made a shift to support life till they arrived at manhood ; yet afterwards upon being introduced into society, they could not be taught any idea of God, nor of the great laws of morality, tho' their early minds had never been perverted by prejudice, or false education. In my opinion therefore, all the portions of religious knowledge scattered among mankind, proceed from real revelation, or are the vestiges of revelation ; if not of the Christian, yet at least of the patriarchal. What is commonly termed natural religion could never yet be met with in any nation, but where the doctrines of revealed religion had been handed down to them in some shape or other. The wiser and more intelligent among the heathens assented to this truth, and invariably declared, that all which they knew concerning the gods, and the homage which they owed to them, and in short every thing of a religious nature, was either taught them by superior beings, or derived from tradition alone.

L E C.

LECTURE VI.

GENESIS iii. 23.

Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden, to till the Ground whence he was taken.

AFTER having heard in what manner our first parents were deceived by an insidious serpent, and how they were afterwards affected with a sense of their guilt, we are informed of the fatal effects of their first disobedience. Both the deceiver and the deceived are arraigned before the tribunal of their supreme judge, that each might receive a sentence according to the demerit of their different crimes. But the tempter, as being the most guilty, is first called upon, and the following sentence is pronounced over him. *Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.*

This passage has given rise to a variety of opinions, many of which may be called pious reveries, rather than rational conjectures. Some maintain,

tain, that the serpent before this period was a noble and beautiful animal, and walked erect, but that the curse pronounced upon it, degraded it into the venomous reptile such as it now appears. It is surely an unnatural sentiment, to suppose, that after the Almighty had finished the work of creation, and *beheld every thing that he had made to be very good*, he should undo any part of his workmanship, and give a creature a different figure and form, from what he had originally impressed upon it. But supposing this change had taken place, it would have been no curse to the serpent; for the lowest of the brute creation, enjoy as much happiness as is suited to their condition, and in this respect are on a level with the highest of the animal world. In scripture stile a thing is said to be *curfed* when it is already in as bad a condition, as it can well be, and seems as if an actual curse had been laid upon it. When the ground is barren it is said to be *curfed*. * *But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing.* The learned men, and rabbies among the Jews, had such a contemptible notion of the vulgar, on account of their ignorance, that they gave them this epithet, † *But this people who knoweth not the law are accursed.* The

* Heb. vi. 8.

† John vii. 49.

serpent being no moral agent, and consequently not accountable, but only a tool or instrument in the affair, could not literally be cursed, farther than being in a low and despicable condition. It throws a new light upon the sentence against the serpent, if the first word *because* be rendered *altho'*; which the original will clearly admit of. Then, the words considered as an *apostrophe* to the creature itself, in the presence and hearing of Adam and Eve, may be thus paraphrased, * *Altho' thou hast done this, and deceived them: And tho' they have entertained more exalted notions of thy subtilty and wisdom, than of any beast of the field, and believed thy language to be thy own; yet, instead of possessing such talents, thou art but a mean and low reptile, and shalt ever continue such; for on thy belly shalt thou go, and eat dust all the days of thy life.* This could not fail to undeceive our first parents of the high opinion, which they had conceived of this creature above every beast of the field. But tho' the words were formally addressed to the serpent, yet they tacitly conveyed a meaning highly applicable to that being, who concealed himself under the body of the serpent, and indicated to him a state of degradation, to which he should ever after be reduced. *To go upon the belly*, is a

* See Shuckford on the Fall.

proverbial expression, denoting an abject and miserable state. The Psalmist when bemoaning the afflicted condition of his country, saith, * *Our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth to the earth. To lick the dust* is such another phrase. † *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust.* The purport then of the whole is this, That the being who now possessed the body of the serpent, should henceforth be subjected to a more miserable and infamous condition, than the meanest and vilest brute upon earth.

The rest of the sentence follows, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* It is very remarkable in these words, that the enmity was only to subsist, between the serpent, and the woman with her seed. But had this history been an allegory, in which the serpent represents passion, what reason can be given, why there should be no opposition on the part of the man? Was he to have no passions wherewith to contend, but to live as he listed, while the woman was only to be kept under restraint? This proves the history to be real, and not allegorical.

* Ps. xliv. 25.

† Ps. lxxii. 9.

But here it may be asked, Could Adam comprehend the meaning of this prophecy, and what inferences could he draw from it? It is highly improbable, that he could know the import of these expressions, and what truths were couched under them, when eminent prophets in future and more enlightened ages, could not unfold their own predictions. What then? He might infer from these words several things which would be of the last importance to him on the present occasion. Hitherto he had enjoyed the delights of Paradise, and tasted the pleasures of life in the highest possible degree; therefore the greater his happiness had been, the more intense would be his pain at the thoughts of losing it. He now stood in judgment before that being whom he had offended, and who he expected, would the next moment put in execution the awful sentence, which would deprive him of his life, and with it every comfort and enjoyment. No beam of hope could penetrate his mind, and allay the terrors of his soul. His conscience convicted him of his guilt, and he had never yet experienced the pardoning grace of his judge. But upon hearing this declaration emitted, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent*, he would feel a greater ecstasy of joy and hope, than a condemned criminal, upon hearing his reprieve published

lished at the place of execution. For he could not fail to draw this inference from the words, that the sentence against him would not be immediately executed, and that his state was not desperate; otherwise no promise of any kind would have been given him. Adam must likewise now begin to think, that there was something more than a literal serpent here meant, otherwise he himself would have been the fittest to bruise the creature's head; but that was to be accomplished by the seed of the woman, which he knew was a character that did not belong to him. As he had hitherto found no enemy but this seducer, and did not know that ever he should meet with another, it would give him great comfort to hear that his head should be bruised, and an end put to his deceit. It would also give him a deep impression of the sovereign power of God, to see that cunning crafty creature whatever it was, under his control and dominion. Thus, what our first parents then learned from the words of the prophecy, would raise within them such hopes of mercy and forgiveness, and give them such impressions of the power and goodness of Almighty God, as would serve to be the foundation of their future religion, and throw into their minds as great a portion of light, as they were yet able to bear. In the words of an
excel-

excellent writer*. ‘This promise may be considered the grand charter of divine mercy to mankind after the fall. And the words thereof are the first chain of a prophecy stretching forward thro’ many thousand years, and gradually unfolding itself at different times, and in diverse manners; while all the parts thereof uniformly exhibit one glorious plan of providence and grace, to rescue mankind from sin, misery, and death.’ I shall now consider the meaning and import of the prophecy itself.

It is needless to prove that virtue and vice, piety and profligacy, have been in a state of enmity and warfare, ever since the latter entered into the world. Hence the sacred writers describe all mankind by two different denominations. The wicked and ungodly are stiled *the children of the devil*, because they are under his influence, and imitate his character. On the other hand, pious and good men are dignified with the title of *the sons of God*, because they copy after his moral perfections, as near as human frailty will permit, and are guided by the word of truth, of which Christ is the author. Between two characters so repugnant and opposite in their aims, there can be no union or alliance. Therefore in the

* Sherlock on Prophecy.

words of the prophecy, God is said to put enmity between them; and this he has done by the light of reason and conscience, and by the plain declarations of his word. But it is added, *It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Bruising the head of a serpent implies its death, because its principal strength is in that part of its body. The serpent was to bruise the heel of the promised seed. But we know, that tho' a bruise in the heel gives pain, yet it may not prove fatal; for the wound may be cured, and soundness again restored.

It is remarkable in this prophecy, that the seed of the serpent should be spoken of as many, whereas the seed of the woman is restricted to one individual, as the word *his* implies. The Apostle Paul, authorises this remark, when he says, * *God spake not of seeds, as of many, but of one that is Christ.* And now, when we who live in the gospel age, find that Jesus Christ, who was literally *the seed of the woman* but not of the man, passed thro' a life of sorrow and of misery, was attacked by the devil, that *old serpent who deceiveth the nations*, and was put to death by those who may be justly denominated his seed; when we see the opposition carried on, between him with his followers, and satan with his; when we are assured

* Gal. iii. 16.

that this great enemy of mankind will be finally destroyed with all his works ; this affords us sufficient grounds to believe, that this prophecy was originally intended for our Saviour, the true seed of the woman, and that thro' him the whole of it will be accomplished in God's own time.

I shall conclude this article with a pertinent quotation from a learned man*. ‘ God, in the promise contained in this prophecy, did a particular kindness to our father Adam ; who, having been seduced by his wife to eat of the forbidden tree, this might have occasioned a breach between them, had not God taken care to prevent it, by making the gracious promise of a Redeemer, to depend upon his union with his wife, from whom he assures them, one should descend, who should repair their loss.’

Next follows the sentence upon the woman, *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception*, alluding to the whole time a woman goes with child, which is generally attended with pain, and various and troublesome complaints. It is added, *in sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children*. It is well known, that there are no other creatures upon earth, which to all appearance are delivered of their young with so much pain, difficulty, and

* Allix. Reflect.

danger, as women are. It is farther said to Eve, *And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee*, i. e. thou shalt be subject to him, and under his direction. It would appear from these words, that the woman was now put more under the power of her husband, than was originally intended, because she presumed to eat of the forbidden fruit without asking his advice. But after all, men should remember, that this power was intrusted to them, not for the purposes of tyranny, but of protection and defence.

Lastly. Sentence was past upon Adam in these words, *Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field.* Some are of opinion, that upon God's pronouncing this sentence, the whole face of nature was immediately changed, and the ground became so barren, that no part of its produce was ever after so rich and luxuriant as before the fall. While others cannot bring themselves to believe, that the Creator all at once, by an act of omnipotent power defaced his workmanship, or destroyed any part of those seeds and plants with which he had stored the earth; and in their
place

place made a new creation of briars and thorns. Therefore they suppose the curse now pronounced upon the ground, implied nothing more, than the great change, which Adam would experience in the soil which he was afterwards to occupy, from that of paradise the place of his former residence. While he remained in that blessed spot, he lived upon the most delicious fruits, but now after all the pains that he could bestow in weeding and cultivating the ground, he would be sometimes under the necessity of eating the herb of the field. Yet in my opinion there is something more implied in that denunciation. For it was sensibly felt many years after the fall, when Lamech prophesied of his son Noah, that ** he should comfort mankind concerning their work and the toil of their hands, because of the ground which the Lord had cursed.* But whatever was the nature of this curse and its effects upon the ground, it was doubtless like all great changes in this world, brought about under the direction of infinite wisdom, by the instrumentality of natural causes; for God always uses means, when they will answer the purposes of his sovereign will and pleasure. Were I to venture a conjecture upon this subject, it would be the following.

* Gen. v. 29.

It appears to me probable from the history of Moses, that this earth has undergone two great changes, since it was modeled anew by the hand of its Creator: the first soon after the fall, and the other in the days of Noah. I am led to this opinion by the following reasons. 1. The sacred historian defines both these revolutions by the same name, viz. *a curse upon the ground*. Thus, after the waters of the flood had abated, and the dry land was restored, God promised to Noah, * that *he would not curse the ground any more, for man's sake*. The last curse was inflicted on the earth, for the sake of a whole generation, therefore it was more universal; and the effects of it were greater, particularly in one respect, by shortening the period of human life. For these and other reasons, Moses gives a fuller and more explicit description of it. The first curse took place for the sake of one man and one woman, therefore it was more partial. And as none of Adam's posterity had ever seen the primordial world, they could make no comparison between the former, and present state of the earth. We need not then be surprised that Moses, with his usual conciseness, should only mention this event, and mark it with this expressive phrase, *a curse upon the ground*.

* Gen. viii. 21.

2. We are told that in seven generations after Adam, * Tubal-Cain became an *instructor of every artificer in brass and iron*. In my opinion, this historical anecdote clearly proves that the globe before this time had suffered some very great convulsion. If the Almighty permitted the laws of nature to operate at the creation, in the same manner as they have done ever since, (which we have no reason to deny) the different parts of the mass would be arranged according to their specific gravities†, and the superficial parts would be of all others the most light and friable; while ores of metals, and such ponderous substances would lie deep in the bowels of the earth. But there might still remain within the globe, especially near the center, (where it would unite in the largest portions with the denser particles) a vast quantity of that elementary fire, which was employed by the Creator as the primary agent in the formation of this globe. And the time, adjusted by infinite wisdom being now come, when this interior fire was disengaged by fermentation and other natural causes, it would break forth in volcanos and earthquakes, and cause a general disruption of the whole mass. By which means, the original *strata* would be deranged, and driven from their former

* Gen. iv. 22.

† See Lect. II. page 35.

Genesis

position, and the lighter, as making least resistance, would give way to the more ponderous and heavy; so that the surface of the earth would be covered with a vast quantity of heterogeneous substances, and among other things, with ores of different metals. And perhaps the face of nature might then assume an appearance pretty similar to what it has at present.

If such a revolution took place, it would be a literal curse upon the ground, the greatest part of which would remain barren and uncultivated, and greatly changed from its primeval fertility. But as all the judgments of God, when rightly understood, proceed from the goodness and rectitude of his nature, this very curse would afterwards be productive of many advantages to the world. It might divide the sea, which was formerly *gathered together into one place*, (* probably around the equator) into different channels, and allow both hemispheres to be peopled by men and other animals. While this curse was inflicting upon the earth, God in his kind providence, preserved his penitent children, as he afterwards did his servant Noah: and probably for their sakes a great tract of the country where they resided, would be free from the effects of this catastrophe. In this happy

* See page 38.

climate the patriarchs afterwards resided, which being blessed with its original fertility, might under God, be the natural cause of their longevity. And as it is probable that the greatest part of animals were created in the land of Eden, this country would, like the ark of Noah, serve as a nursery for storing with inhabitants the future world. 3. Moses afterwards mentions another circumstance which renders the above theory highly probable. He says, † that *God placed at the East of the garden of Eden, cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.* In scripture the extraordinary judgments of God are said to be executed by his angels, who are sometimes compared to * *flames of fire.* Therefore the *cherubim and the flaming sword* may probably mean nothing more, than that a large portion of ground on the Eastward of Paradise, was set on fire, during the above awful occasion, and continued burning with such violence, that the flame thereof at a distance appeared like a brandished sword turning every way with the wind. Now if the soil of Eden was bitumenous like that of Gomorrah, (which was once so fertile as to be compared to the † *garden of the Lord*) the fire would continue burning, till it produced the

‡ Gen. iii. 24.

* Ps. civ. 4.

† Gen. xiii. 10.

same effect in the one place as it did in the other, and turned a great part of that tract of ground into sea : which seems to countenance the opinion of those, who place the situation of Paradise in some part of the Persian Gulph. - 4. It is not only probable, but consonant to the history of religious providence, that when the Almighty was about to erect a new constitution over the world, he would give some signal exhibition of his majesty and power ; as he afterwards did on the top of Mount Sinai *in thunders and in lightnings*, when he gave the law to the children of Israel. And if the first violation of a positive precept under that institution, was always punished in a severe and public manner, need we wonder that the first violation of divine authority, which took place among mankind, and which produced such rueful effects to the whole of the species, should be marked to future ages, by some awful and tremendous judgment ; and which could not fail to give our first parents the deepest impressions of the incontrollable power of God, and of the fatal consequences of incurring his displeasure.

I now return to the remaining part of the sentence against Adam. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground.* Suppose trees and plants were in the highest perfection in Paradise, yet in other places, some time
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might elapse, before they arrived at such maturity, as to yield sufficient nourishment to man. Adam therefore being denied his former food, would be now obliged to live by tillage; for which reason he had a new grant made him, viz. that of *bread*, as being necessary for his future sustenance. Whether he found seeds of grain, in the soil where he afterwards settled, or whether he carried them out of the garden, we are not told. During his innocence, while he was employed in dressing the garden, he would acquire some knowledge in the culture of such plants and herbs, as he found best suited his constitution. But to find out proper spots where to sow his seeds, joined with his pains in clearing the ground of weeds, and saving his crops from being destroyed by birds of the air and beasts of the field, this would occasion him often to labour with the sweat of his brow: and the vicissitudes of his lot, and frailty of his frame, would frequently subject him to sorrow, misery, and grief. Thus it will be found that the whole of this sentence, is only a comment upon the original threatening, *in dying thou shalt die*; and all the different ingredients of it, are only so many preludes or *apparatus* for introducing death the great destroyer of the human race. But as God intended to ripen man thro' a mortal life for a happy immortality, he would no doubt direct

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him in his providence to the use of such means, as were necessary for his support during his *appointed time upon earth*: but the sentence against Adam, has been all along felt by the greater part of his posterity, so as to keep alive upon their minds that part of it which concerns sorrow and the labour of their hands.

The concluding part of Adam's sentence is this, *For dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*. Tho' Eve was involved in the common lot of humanity, yet this sentence was not addressed to her, but to Adam alone; yea, and repeated to him, to teach him that his plea against his wife, should not screen him from his merited punishment. When God says to Adam, *Dust thou art*, this clearly proves, that he was created with a mortal body as well as any of his posterity; for dust has a natural tendency to dissolution; and had it not been for the tree of life, or some other supernatural means, he must at last have *gone the way of all flesh*, by the very same laws, which make a lump of clay moulder and fall in pieces, after being long exposed to the influence of the elements. Without doubt he who *upholds all things by the word of his power*, would have clothed Adam's body with immortality if he had retained his innocence. But it would have been repugnant to the character of the righteous governor
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of the world, to have given perpetual existence to a sinful creature. Therefore upon withdrawing the supernatural providence, under which our first parents had hitherto lived, they like every other creature became subjected to the ordinary course of nature, and accordingly dust was permitted to return to the dust. The threatening against them was no sooner pronounced, than it began to operate, for then they had *the sentence of death within themselves*. Yet God in great mercy, gave them a respite from the full execution of it, till by repentance and sincere obedience, they should become prepared for a future and better inheritance, than ever they had enjoyed upon earth.

Adam now understanding, that his life was to be prolonged, and that he was to be the father of a new race, changed his wife's name from *woman*, to that of *Eve*, i. e. *the mother of all living*. He would now recollect that his Maker at first declared them *man* and *wife*, and joined them together in the nearest relation. And as his children grew up, he would not fail to instruct them in God's original designation and command.

Then we are told, that *the Lord God made unto Adam and to his wife coats of skins*. This circumstance is either introduced here by way of anticipation, or it proves that our first parents remained for some considerable time in the garden, after

their fall; as it is generally agreed that these skins were taken from animals, which had been killed for the purpose of sacrificing. If this was the case, they must then, before leaving Paradise, have been instructed in the nature and manner of that religious institution, and made acquainted with the mode of dressing these skins, and suiting them to their bodies, so as to become proper garments for them. Such were the first clothes of mankind, and such are worn to this day by many tribes upon earth. If therefore we lay any stress upon the order in which Moses relates many incidents after the fall, we must naturally conclude, that before the father of mercies, sent his frail offspring into the world to provide for themselves, he gave them time, and probably instructions how to accommodate themselves with food and raiment; and pointed out to them such materials, as were necessary to be carried along with them, to enable them to perform their irksome journey, and to support their lives, when they came to settle at the place of their destination.

Adam now receives a mandate from his Maker for his immediate departure, but this is prefaced with these remarkable words, *Behold, the man is become like one of us.* * The majesty of God is fre-

* See Lect. II. page 48.

quently described by the similitude of a king, sitting on his throne, and all his ministers standing around him, to hear and execute his commands. Thus, he is here introduced as speaking to other beings, and saying, *behold*, a word which indicates something singular and extraordinary; which surely was the present case, when God declared, *the man is become like one of us*. The meaning cannot be, that man by sinning, became like a celestial being, in any other respect, saving one, namely, that he now became a kind of God to himself, by throwing off the authority of his omniscient guide, and taking upon him to act as his own director and judge.

Then follows, *And now lest he put forth his hand, and eat of the tree of life, and live for ever*. From these words many draw an absurd conclusion, viz. That if Adam had once tasted of the fruit of this tree he would have never died. But this opinion is not only unnatural, but it represents the tree of life as a kind of spell or charm. I have formerly observed, that Adam had as free a grant of this tree, as of any one in the whole garden: and no doubt he would taste of its fruit every day, after his usual work was over in tilling and dressing the ground. Besides, if our first parents had contracted any bodily disorder by eating of the forbidden fruit, they had time before leaving Paradise to eat
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of the tree of life, which would remove every dangerous complaint, restore to them health, and a perfectly sound constitution. But whether we consider this tree, as possessing a medicinal virtue, or only as a symbol of immortality, we are not to suppose, that eating once of it, would have produced such a miraculous effect, as ever after to prevent death. A medicine sufficiently answers its intention, when it cures the malady at the time complained of, but it is not to be supposed that it will ward off every future complaint. Our Saviour is the true bread of life, but *tasting* once of *this heavenly gift*, does not constitute a true Christian: to be entitled to this character, we must habitually receive from him additional supplies of grace. Adam being debarred from Paradise, he could no longer stretch forth his hand, as he had formerly done, and eat of the tree of life; and when the mean of perpetuating his life was removed, by the course of nature, it behoved him to die. An antient writer has a pertinent remark upon this subject. He says, * ‘When man spoiled himself, God unmade him, that he might make him better.’

Moses now brings us to the last part of this affecting scene, and tells us, that *the Lord God sent*

* Epiphanius.

Adam forth from the garden, to till the ground whence he was taken. The last expression seems to intimate that he was removed to the place where he was created, and from whence he was at first conducted (probably by angels) to the garden. Or the words may imply nothing more, than that his future employment was to till the earth, from which he drew his original, and to which he was afterwards to return. It is added, *he drove out the man.* But this phrase alludes to ones being sent into exile or banishment; yet a merciful judge after pronouncing the sentence, may execute it with every mark of tenderness and humanity.

Having now reviewed the history of the fall, and its more immediate consequences to Adam and Eve, I shall take under my consideration, how far the influence of this memorable transaction has extended to mankind in general, and affected their present or future happiness. To give us the clearer and more distinct view of this subject, it may not be amiss, first to make a comparison betwixt our first parents and their posterity, and see wherein the resemblance holds, and in what things the difference doth consist. But I would premise, that human nature has always been the same, and the great distinctions among the human race whether of a natural or moral kind, arise from accidental circumstances and conditions of life.

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Divesting ourselves then of prejudices, and listening to the dictates of reason and revelation, let us draw the parallel betwixt Adam and his children; and we will find that each had advantages and disadvantages, which were denied to the other; tho' in many respects the resemblance is strictly similar; but more particularly in the following things.

1. If Adam was created and brought into being by God, so we are equally the workmanship of the same Almighty hand. * *It is he that made us, and not we ourselves.* If we believe this to be a truth, and allow that God alone is the author of our nature, and of every power and faculty which we enjoy, the consequence follows, that, as being the divine workmanship, and sent into life by him, we are good in his sight in every sense of the word, in which he applied it to our first parents, and to every creature beside; and for that reason we must come into the world as much under his blessing as any being which he ever made. When God at first created every living thing, he not only *saw that it was good*, but it is likewise said, *he blessed it*. But can there be a greater insult offered to his righteous and benevolent character, than to maintain, that his original blessing is continued with all other creatures, with the

* Pl. c. 3.

birds of the air and wild beasts of the forest, and yet that he has withdrawn it from *man*, the first and noblest of all creatures upon earth. Revelation expressly declares the contrary, and acquaints us that the very same blessing which God pronounced over Adam in a state of innocence, he afterwards pronounced over * Noah and his posterity, yea, and enlarged it with a grant of animal food. In our very formation; in the way by which we are sent into life; supported from our mother's womb; and acquire the exercise of every power of body and mind; the divine blessing still accompanies us, till we forfeit it by abusing his goodness, and trampling upon his authority. God then makes us good, and we are never bad, till we make ourselves so.

2. Adam immediately upon his creation, resembled his posterity in many instances, when they make their first appearance in life. Both had senses bestowed upon them, thro' which, objects might convey ideas to their minds; but before they could exercise these senses, and by experience become acquainted with objects, both would be equally destitute of knowledge. It is remarked of children, that their chief happiness seems to consist in taking food. So we find, that for some

* Gen. ix. 1.

time, Adam's whole attention was engrossed with indulging his natural appetites, in so far that for the sake of food he forfeited his life ; yea, the whole incidents of his history before the fall, relate solely to his animal part ; and for gratifying which, Paradise was exquisitely fitted. Whatever capacities young children may have for the attainment of knowledge, without instruction they will remain in a state of ignorance. In like manner, tho' Adam's faculties were acute and strong, yet he stood in need of direction from his heavenly guide ; if this had been withheld, his own understanding would never have informed him wherein his true happiness did consist. So long as children are under the tuition of virtuous parents, they will probably retain their innocence, but when in their younger years, they want to be their own directors, and to be restrained by no rule but their own inclinations, they fall into many dangerous snares, which often prove ruinous to their health of body and peace of mind. So, Adam as long as he lived in subjection to his heavenly father, was innocent and happy, but no sooner did he lean to his own understanding, than he fell into error, and afterwards into sorrow and distress.

3. In so far, there was a striking resemblance between the early life of Adam, and that of his posterity ; but in other respects the difference is

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extremely great. Adam made his appearance in the world in the prime of his life, with all the faculties of his body and mind in the highest degree of strength and vigour, therefore he could employ the whole of them on whatsoever objects were presented to him. He was also capable of exercising his reason, without its being in the least clouded by passion. Whereas, our early capacities are like our bodies, feeble and weak, and it requires time to give them such a tone, and degree of acuteness, as to enable us to comprehend objects in their true likenesses and proportion. Besides this, we are born with appetites and passions, which operate with violence, long before reason has arrived at a sufficient degree of maturity to curb and restrain them. Hence the dominion of passion becomes habitual, and forms a kind of second nature. To counteract this false bias, and to be led by reason and religion, is a work too arduous for human nature, when left to itself, and not assisted by the grace of God. An absolute command of ourselves appears incompatible with our present state of frailty and imperfection, and confirms this truth that * *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*

* Eccl. vii. 20.

4. Adam had a great advantage above his posterity, in having no bad example to contaminate his mind, or corrupt his morals. Whereas, we scarcely find a stronger propensity in our nature, than to imitate the manners of those among whom we live. It grows up with us from our infancy, and forms that diversity of character, which is found among mankind. The force of example is almost irresistible; and when it is of the vicious kind, it proves more ruinous to virtue, than the depravity of men's own minds; which clearly proves the great difficulty of retaining our innocence and virtue, ever since sin prevailed among the human race.

5. But what gave Adam the greatest superiority over his descendents, was, that freedom of access which he had to his heavenly teacher. It was no trouble or labour to him, to learn whatever he wanted to know. It was his happiness and honour, yea, and must have been his delight, to have God for his counsellor and instructor. This was his advantage and his security. But we his children must in a great measure depend upon our own judgment. We are often at a loss, how to steer our course thro' life, and in what manner to encounter the trials of our lot, therefore we thirst after knowledge of different kinds, and search for it with industry and labour; and after
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all, find ourselves mistaken in the use and application of it. Man therefore can never be happy but under the direction of his God. When we walk in his light, we walk in safety; and *great peace and pleasure have all they who keep his law.*

I shall now proceed, to review the effects of Adam's transgression on mankind in general, when considered as moral and accountable agents. But here I must acknowledge, that in my opinion, some men indulging their piety at the expence of their understanding, and others with a view to promote the interests of superstition and priestcraft, have fabricated doctrines upon this subject, repugnant to the first principles of reason, and derogatory to the character of the righteous governor of the world; many of which doctrines divest him of justice, of equity, and benevolence, and exhibit him a *hard master indeed, * reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed.* These doctrines, like all that *wood, hay, and stubble*, which has been *built* upon the foundation of Christ, are supported by their votaries, with nothing but a few texts of scripture, detached from their natural connection and import; or with metaphorical expressions and allusions literally understood. The Apostle Paul says, † *Levi paid*

* Matt. xxv. 26.

† Heb. vii. 9.

tithes to Melchisedec in the loins of Abraham. Now, suppose he had used another figure, exactly similar, and said, that the whole of the human race were present with Noah and his three sons in the ark. Who would not see the absurdity of taking either of these declarations in a literal sense. But the same apostle says, * *All men sinned in Adam*, i. e. they were in his loins when he eat of the forbidden tree. He says also, † *they died in him*, the meaning is, as he became liable to death, so did his posterity also. Now what reason can be given, why these last expressions of the apostle, should not be taken in a figurative sense, as well as the former; for it is impossible that they can be literally true, because nothing can be predicated or affirmed of any being whatever, till it be once brought into existence.

It is commonly said, that Adam was our federal head, and that God entered into a covenant with him not only for himself, but for his posterity. But Moses does not give us the most distant hint of any such transaction, tho' he is the only man, who wrote the life and history of our first parents. Neither does Christ the author of our religion teach us any such doctrine; yea, in the whole of his discourses, he never once mentioned Adam's

* Rom. v. 12.

† 1 Cor. xv. 22.

name. If this covenant had been made with Adam, it must have been in some period of his innocence; but is it not strange to think, that he should enter into any engagement about his posterity, before he knew that he was to have any? This piece of information he never received till he fell, and upon its being communicated to him, he changed his wife's name to Eve, *i. e.* the mother of all living. But it may be submitted to the impartial and unprejudiced, whether it is likely, that a just and merciful God, would intrust millions of rational beings to the keeping of such a frail creature as Adam, and that, under such a rigorous penalty.

It has been a received doctrine, that Adam's guilt is transferred, and imputed to the whole of his posterity, and that for his sake alone we are obnoxious to the divine wrath. But we should consider that guilt is a personal thing, and can no more be transferred, than one man's being and existence can be transferred to another. If Adam's guilt makes all his children guilty, then his innocence must have made them all innocent; but this would be giving him a superiority over Jesus Christ, whose followers do not attain to a state of absolute purity and innocence in this life. It would also be exalting Adam's posterity above
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the angels in Heaven, who had their trial, during which some of them fell.

But it is argued, that the obliquity of our nature, our ignorance, our weakness and proneness to sin, proves man not to be, what he was at first when he came pure and perfect from the hand of his Maker; and that therefore he has contracted a moral taint, which is the source of every evil. I have already shewn, that mankind do not come into the world, in the same state that their first parents did. They derived their origin from immediate creation, and we from natural generation, which must make a great difference betwixt them and us. And as to all that frailty, that weakness and imperfection, which is commonly called the corruption of our nature, this need not be laid to Adam's charge. It arises from the very constitution of our being, and is founded in the manner in which we grow up in life; in the early sway of our unruly appetites and passions; in the slow progress of reason; in the limited nature of all our mental powers and faculties; and in the contagion of corrupt example. But then, were we not so constituted, we should not be men, and would neither be fit for this world, nor this world fit for us.

It is a natural and pertinent question to ask, If Adam's sin was the occasion of ours, pray, what, was

was the occasion of his? He had no original taint or corruption to give him a wrong bias; and yet his heart became depraved and corrupted, otherwise he could not have been guilty of a sinful action. Therefore no casuistry whatever can draw the line between the rise of sin within Adam's mind, and the minds of his posterity. The apostle's observation will equally apply to both,
** When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.*

Those who maintain that we are accountable for Adam's sin, ought to reflect, that it is a maxim in equity, and in all laws both human and divine, that the father ought to be responsible for the faults of his children, rather than the children for the faults of their father.

I shall readily allow, that Adam's posterity have derived from him every thing, which consistently with the unchangeable laws of righteousness, and the established course of providence could be transferred to them. Thus, as Adam was of † *the earth, earthy*, so in like manner all his children are earthy. As he had forfeited Paradise and the tree of life, his posterity can reap no benefit from either; and as he introduced sin, misery, and death, all descended from him are subjected to the effects of these, by the very constitution of their nature,

* Ja. i. 15.

† 1 Cor. xv. 47.

and that plan of government, which Almighty God hath erected over this world. One part of this plan we plainly observe, namely, that happiness and misery in this life are promiscuously blended together, and that parents in the hands of providence are means of raising and of depressing their posterity.

I shall now remove a common objection, at which many have stumbled. How is it consistent with the justice and goodness of God, that the posterity of Adam should in the least be punished for his sin? But may it not be asked, with what propriety can a man be said to be punished, for wanting a thing to which he has no title or claim? Does God punish us because he has not made us angels, and placed us in the kingdom of Heaven*. Had he taken away from mankind any thing to which they had a right, or put them into a state of misery worse than the enjoyment of life, without any fault of their own, this might have been hard to reconcile with the clemency and rectitude of his nature: but to withhold from us Paradise and the tree of life, or not send us into life in the same condition as he did Adam, cannot be called a punishment. Our present state such as it is, with every enjoyment belonging to it, is the result of

* Locke's Reasonabl. of Christianity.

his free goodness and mercy. And * *shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, Why makest thou me so?*

I am well aware, that a doctrine has been long established in the world, and has been embraced by great and learned men, that *man* possesses in himself some inherent qualities, independent of the gift of God; particularly that his soul, as not consisting of parts, is incapable of dissolution, therefore naturally immortal. I am apt to think, that the *natural immortality of the soul*, is a phrase which would have sounded harshly in the ears of an apostle of Christ. One of the most enlightened of that character, expressly declares, that † *God only hath immortality*. Whether this is predicated of the father or the son, it surely debars a human being from such a claim. And it appears to me a leading doctrine of our holy religion, a doctrine frequently inculcated by the first preachers of the gospel, that immortality, or in other words *eternal life*, is the ‡ *free gift of God thro' Jesus Christ*: yea, it is spoke of in this very light, as the § Christian's great reward.

With a view to counteract the effect of Adam's sin, our Saviour came from Heaven, to redeem mankind from death, and restore them again to life. But as the *wages of sin*, by an eternal and

* If. xlv. 9. † 1 Tim. vi. 16. ‡ Rom. v. 15, 16.
§ 2 Tim. i. 1.

established law of righteousness, must be *death*, both before and after the resurrection; and as *no man liveth and sinneth not*, therefore, in order to prevent death from reigning for ever, over the posterity of Adam, God, of his unbounded mercy, was pleased to erect a mild and gracious constitution through his own son, by which, sincere obedience is accepted, in place of that which is absolutely perfect. Under this dispensation, death is never considered as a punishment to good men, but rather an entrance into a better life.

Farther, death may be viewed as a constitution, intended by infinite wisdom, for giving a plenary display of his goodness to the posterity of Adam. Thus, in order to make millions of rational beings share in the bounties of his nature, it was necessary that death should serve as an instrument in his hand, for causing one generation pass away, in order to make room for another, till at last the whole number of the elect be compleated. One observes, ‘ that God did not confine man to the earth
 ‘ as to a prison. But as a prudent gardener, allows
 ‘ his plants to remain in the nursery, till they are
 ‘ fit to be removed into the field, to succeed those
 ‘ trees which are cut down, in like manner does
 ‘ the wise framer of the world, prepare men in
 ‘ this life, for their removal into a future and
 ‘ better state.’ And indeed this constitution of
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providence answers many good ends to the world*, which bespeak the wisdom and goodness of that being who permitted it to take place.

Thus, the history of the creation and fall of man, as delineated by Moses, is marked with the brightest traces of wisdom, power, and goodness; and it teaches us this useful lesson, that mankind are not, what sour and gloomy minds represent them, the objects of the divine hatred and aversion, but that on the contrary, they are the most striking monuments of his bounty and tender regards. He † *knows their frame, and remembers they are but dust*, therefore he pities their failings, and *bealeth their backslidings*. And when the whole plan of divine grace to mankind shall be completed, he will display his equity and justice; for he hath declared, ‡ *That the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son, but the soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

* See Lect. IV. page 127. † Ps. ciii. 14. ‡ Ezek. xviii. 20.

LECTURE VII.

GENESIS iv. 16.

And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the Land of Nod, on the East of Eden.

AFTER the sacred historian had given us an account of the manner, in which the Almighty treated our first parents upon their entrance into life, and likewise of the fatal consequences of their transgression, he proceeds to the history of furnishing the world with inhabitants; and tho' his detail be brief and concise, yet he mentions several of those characters, who were the most eminent while they lived, and whose actions had the greatest influence on their posterity.

Moses gives us no further account of Adam's life after leaving the garden, but that he begat some children, and died at such an age. Yet we have no reason to doubt, but the venerable patriarch ever after led a life of penitence, and of the strictest piety. The various communications which he had enjoyed with his Maker in Paradise,
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and which were probably renewed to him after his fall, could not fail to make the deepest impressions upon his mind. The gracious respite he had met with, from the execution of the sentence denounced against him, would make him cautious of offending for the time to come; lest the next violation of the divine authority, should put an end to his existence. The *cherubim and flaming sword*, or the devouring flame on the *East of Eden*, (which might continue burning all his life) would be to him, what the vestiges of the ark were to Noah and his sons, an awful memorial of the danger of incurring the divine displeasure. Besides, his wordly comforts being in a great measure withdrawn, his mind would be naturally disposed for relishing those pleasures, which flow from piety and religion.

The first thing which we hear of Adam in his new situation was, that * *he knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain*. From these words, some maintain, that he had never known his wife in a state of innocence. But supposing he had; and that Eve had been with child of Cain in Paradise, it could not in the least have affected the young man or his progeny, either in a natural or moral sense. The word Cain signifies *possession*.

* Gen. iv. 1, &c.

Eve says, that her reason for giving him that name, was this, * *I have gotten a man from the Lord*: intimating thereby her gratitude to God, and the joy which she felt on the occasion. Some translate the words, *I have gotten a man which is the Lord*; and imagine that Eve believed that this new born infant was the Messiah. But it is not likely, that the mother of mankind, had as yet so just views of the scheme of human redemption. Then, *she bare his brother Abel*. Abel means *vanity*, and in the opinion of some *mourning*. Many think that he got this name, because his parents did not place in him the hopes of the promised seed, as they did in Cain. But why might not Adam by a prophetic spirit have foreseen, that it would be in vain to expect much comfort from this son, as he would soon be deprived of him by death. It is usual among divines to find a mystical meaning in every proper name in the Old Testament, and to the prejudice of sound knowledge, to draw from these names, such doctrines as chime in with their own fancy and taste. Whereas, in the first ages, when words were few and knowledge confined, it is natural to suppose, that parents named their children as they still continue to do, from the meereſt circumstances, or whatever at that time happened, moſt forcibly to impreſs their imaginations. Tho' ſuch names as were given by God,

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* Gen. iv. 1.

or we have reason to believe were suggested by a prophetic spirit, may be considered as descriptive of the future character and condition of those on whom they were imposed. And as it was common for the Jews to change the names of, or give new ones to such as were grown up, many of those characteristic names which we meet with in the Bible might be given to men, after their actions and conduct had discovered their temper and dispositions.

Moses acquaints us, that *Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground*. Which shews us, that the latter was accounted the more honourable employment, otherwise the elder brother would not have made choice of it. Agriculture is one of the oldest arts in the world, and the most universally useful. Adam followed this employment all his life time, and so did his eldest son. Bread was granted to him, in lieu of the fruits of Paradise on which he had formerly lived. It was then and still continues to be the principal food of mankind, for which reason it is called by way of eminence *the staff of life*. Grains for making bread, were at first created such as they are. * Culture may improve them, but can never change their fundamental essence or species. We may

* Goguet.

imagine, that Adam found these growing wild, in the country where he took up his residence. But it is more probable, that he carried along with him out of the garden, all kinds that were edible, and fit for making bread. By rearing these, they would soon encrease, especially in a fertile soil, to such a degree, as to supply his children with feed, throughout their different dispersions. Thus perhaps, every kind of grain of which bread is prepared, originally grew in Paradise. And tho' all the different species of grain with which we are acquainted, grow wild in some parts of the earth, yet that is no argument against the above opinion, because they might have been transported thither by various causes, or scattered over the globe at the flood of Noah.

While *Cain was a tiller of the ground, Abel was a keeper of sheep*. The early world seems to have been divided betwixt these two occupations. Kings were sometimes called to the throne from the plough: and princes and heads of families, were not ashamed to tend their flocks. But an objection here occurs. What occasion was there for keeping sheep, when none of them could be eaten; as it is generally agreed that animal food was prohibited to the antediluvian world? But even upon this supposition, sheep and other animals might at this period, be of great use to men, be-
sides

sides yielding them food. Their flocks no doubt consisted of such creatures, as were of the domestic kind, and such as by the divine law were pronounced clean, and fit for being offered in sacrifice: therefore numbers would be kept for this very purpose*. Their skins besides serving men as garments, might answer many other valuable intentions. Vestments of hair and wool soon succeeded the ruder coverings of skins. Consequently great profit would be derived from such animals as could be shorn; especially in countries, where the inhabitants led a pastoral life, and dwelt in tents. And we afterwards find that Abel's sacrifice was of this kind. They might use several of these animals, as they still do in some parts of the world, for bearing of burthens, and drawing of carriages: for we may take for granted that the first inventions for easing men of labour, would be of the simplest kind, and such as came easiest to hand. But keeping flocks of sheep, goats, and such like would be of great utility, by affording quantities of milk, which is found to be the most nourishing diet both to the young and the old. And their carcases tho' not used as food, might answer some useful purposes, perhaps in manuring the soil.

* Revelation Examined with Candor,

It is highly probable that Adam and Eve had a very numerous offspring. There was an antient tradition that they had thirty sons, and twenty-seven daughters, and indeed the number does not seem to be exaggerated. Of these Moses mentions only three, as being perhaps the most remarkable of the whole, or at least, whose history was the most pertinent for him to record. The two elder were of different employments, but of still more different dispositions. We are told of them, that *in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord. And Abel he brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.*

An excellent writer observes*, ‘ that it is one
 ‘ thing to view the world in its present circum-
 ‘ stances, and another thing to view it in its ori-
 ‘ ginal. God would not have suffered the earth to
 ‘ be filled with weak and miserable creatures,
 ‘ had he not intended them to be objects of his
 ‘ mercy. No wonder therefore, if they appear to
 ‘ be, what he intended they should be.—When
 ‘ man was innocent, nature was then alive and
 ‘ vigorous, and he had before him the prospect of
 ‘ all that happiness to which he was created,
 ‘ to encourage and support his obedience. In

* Sherlock on Prophecy. *Passim.*

‘ this

‘ this state, religion wanted no other assistance,
‘ therefore it had no other.—But when the case
‘ was altered by the transgression of our first pa-
‘ rents, when nature had no longer any sure
‘ hopes of comfort in reserve, but left them to the
‘ fearful expectation of a judgment near at hand,
‘ and God came down to judge the offenders, it
‘ was necessary either to destroy them, or raise
‘ them to a capacity of salvation, and give them
‘ such hopes as might enable them to exercise a
‘ reasonable religion.” Hence it appears that
as the same regimen which supports a sound con-
stitution, might be highly improper for restoring
health to the sickly and diseased ; so it now behoved
Adam to come under a different constitution,
from that under which he had formerly lived ; in
which he could have no other hopes, but such as
were founded on the mercy of God ; and which
hopes could be made known to him in no other
way, but by a promise, or *word of prophecy* : which
clearly proves that prophecy must be an essential
and leading part of a sinner’s religion. Accord-
ingly we are informed, that immediately upon their
fall, God vouchsafed to our first parents a gra-
cious promise, that *the seed of the woman should*
bruise the head of the serpent. Here the brevity of
Moses’s history obliges him to omit several
things, which we must conclude took place at
this

this remarkable period, and for which we are sufficiently authorised from the few hints which he gives us. One thing we may take for granted, namely, that if God gave a promise to Adam, and thro' him to the whole of his posterity, he would infuse into his mind such a portion of light, with respect to the meaning of this prophecy, as was a sufficient foundation on which to build his present and future hopes of pardon and restoration to his favour. But there is one part of the above prophecy which contains a doctrine, which in all ages of the world has been found the most friendly to the frailty of our nature, and the best and surest support to virtue and genuine religion, namely, that the true seed of the woman, should destroy the great work of satan, viz. death, and once more restore man to life. Now tho' a future state be a doctrine which human reason could never possibly investigate, and therefore at first must have been a pure revelation from Heaven, yet it is so consentaneous to our natural desires, and to our notions of a supreme and righteous governor, and withal so useful under all the pressures of our lot, that when once introduced into the world, it was not likely it ever would be totally lost, however much it be obscured. And we find that this is truly the case. Therefore in my opinion, a future life, would be among the first truths of
reli-

religion communicated to our first parents after their fall, and would be the great and leading doctrine of the primitive religion of mankind.

But, whatever dispensations of religious knowledge were at first imparted to mankind, it was necessary for preserving the memory of these dispensations, that they should have some mode or form of worship; and which no doubt their heavenly teacher prescribed to them. Whatever their religious ritual was, we may take for granted, it would be plain and simple, and chiefly addressed to their senses. * ‘ For they were not yet able
‘ (as was said of Moses †) to look up to him who
‘ is invisible, and perform a purely rational and
‘ spiritual worship. They could have no very perfect notions of his nature and providence, neither had they much leisure for speculation and refinement on these subjects. They were all
‘ tillers of the ground, or keepers of cattle; employed sufficiently in cultivating this new world;
‘ and thro’ the curse brought on it by their forefather, forced with him to *eat their bread in the sweat of their brow.*”

The time set apart for worship and religious meditation was an institution of God to our first parents in the garden, and after they had sinned

* Considerations on the Theory of Rel. last edit. page 60.
† Heb. xi. 27.

would be religiously observed by them and their posterity. For God, to give a pattern of rest to all creatures capable of it, is said not only to have rested on the *seventh day*, but likewise to have *blessed and sanctified* that day. Holiness or sanctity cannot be applied to time in any other sense, but its being set apart for holy and pious purposes*. There is no doubt therefore but Adam assembled his family every seventh day, and worshipped God in the manner in which he had been instructed. The very observance of this day as distinguished from every other, would bring to their remembrance the history of the creation, and impress their minds with worthy sentiments of the power and wisdom of the great Lord of Heaven and Earth. The natural light of their own reason would suggest to them, that when they met together in the presence of God, it was fit and proper that they should confess and acknowledge their sins, and by prayer supplicate the mercy of that being who alone could pardon them. And a sense of gratitude would naturally lead them to adopt some mode of expressing their thankfulness for the bounties of providence and grace. But tho' the above parts of worship are only founded in probability, yet the history of Moses, authorises

* See Lect. II. page 59.

us to believe, that there was one religious institution positively appointed by God, viz. that of offering up sacrifices, and shedding the blood of creatures. * ‘ The oblation of an innocent animal in the room of the guilty sacrificer, would be an affecting memorial of the demerit of sin, and an apt mean of enforcing and fixing a sense thereof, on the heart of the transgressor. And these solemnities would transfer the same sentiments to their children. It would farther be a moving exemplification of the suffering of death, which all the race of mankind were become liable to by sin. The groans and agonies of the dying animal, its ghastly appearance after death, and its reduction to ashes upon the altar, all conspired to set forth the humbling triumphs of death, over all the boasted and admired excellency of animate beings.’ Moses indeed does not mention the time or words of this institution, nor any part of the patriarchal worship; because the religion of his own countrymen, was the same as it had been from the beginning, tho’ there were several additions made to it afterwards.

When God had entered into a gracious covenant with our first parents, it is reasonable to suppose, that he appointed sacrifices as a perpetual

* Winder’s History of Knowledge.

ratification of it, addressed to their very senses ; for by the blood of sacrifices, covenants were ratified in after times. Sacrifices are also considered in the * New Testament, as shadows, types, and emblems of good things to come ; hence, they may be explained in a twofold sense. Either † as symbolical addresses to God ; intended to express before him, the devotion, the affections, and desires of the heart by significant and emblematical actions ; or, as an institution to prepare mankind for reaping the benefits of the obedience and suffering of our blessed Lord and Saviour, the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world.

A controversy has been agitated among learned men, concerning the origin of sacrifices ‡ ; and specious arguments have been made use of, to prove that they took their rise from some human establishment. It would carry me beyond my intended limits, to state, or refute the whole of these. I shall therefore satisfy myself with remarking, that there are two considerations which evidently prove sacrifices to have been introduced into the world by a positive institution of Almighty God. The first may be drawn from revelation,

* Heb. x. 1.

† See Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Atonement.

‡ Considerations on the Theory of Religion, last edit.
page 56, note 1.

and the other from reason, and the universal practice of mankind.

If Adam had already felt in such a sensible manner, the fatal effects of being guided by his own counsels, can we imagine, that he would have introduced into his family, a mode of worship purely of his own invention, especially when he had access to know the mind of God in things of lesser moment? Or is it reasonable to suppose, that the first act of religion mentioned in sacred history, would have been so acceptable to the Deity, that he put a mark of distinction upon it, had it not been of his own appointment? The scriptures inform us, that God is *jealous of his honour*, and that all manner of *will-worship*, and teaching *for doctrines the commandments of men*, are highly offensive to him; therefore nothing can be more improbable, than that he should not only countenance a superstitious rite, (had it really been so) but introduce it into, and make it a principal part of that system of laws which he afterwards prescribed to his chosen people. * It is evident that before the flood, there was a distinction of animals into *clean* and *unclean*, as appears from Noah's mentioning this distinction among the creatures that went into the ark, and came out of

* Cockburn's Inquiry, page 147.

it. Now, this division could only respect animals fit for being sacrificed, and therefore must have been positively enjoined by God : for by a posterior grant to man, * *he gave him for meat every thing that liveth, even as the green herb he gave it him.* And this very difference was ratified by the law of Moses, under which, many creatures were clean for food which were not to be offered in sacrifice. † Further, it appears from Moses, that sacrificing was the first institution taught our first parents after their fall, and even before they left the garden ; if we suppose, that the coats wherewith God clothed them, were nothing but the skins of creatures, slain for that purpose.

Another strong and forcible argument to prove that sacrifices were of divine appointment, may be drawn from the universal practice of all nations, in making use of this rite. ‡ There is no religious system, which ever obtained among mankind, but has either originated from nature, from reason, or from interest. It surely cannot be agreeable to any instinct in the human mind, to shed the blood of, and to put to death harmless and useful creatures, for answering no one end or purpose whatever. And it is impossible that

* Gen. ix. 3. † Lect. VI.

‡ See this subject fully discussed in *Révelation Examined with Candor.* Chap. 8.

reason could ever find out any connection betwixt the blood of an innocent animal, and the guilt of a wicked and sinful man ; or ever figure that a just, a holy and merciful being, would accept of the one, as a compensation for the other. If any such mode of atonement had been invented by one man or a few, the greater number would have opposed it, as affecting their interest in such a sensible manner ; especially in the early world, when their whole substance consisted of their herds and flocks : and had one generation adopted such a mode, it is not likely that succeeding ones would have followed a practice so costly and expensive. If therefore, the rite of sacrificing did universally prevail, as all allow it did, it could be owing to nothing but the irresistible influence of example or authority ; and no example could have such influence as that of Adam, and no authority could be laid in balance with that of God.

But, granting the institution of sacrifices to be from God, it may be still objected and said, Where is the congruity betwixt the death of an innocent creature and the pardon of guilt ? or how could the shedding of blood, be any wise instrumental in restoring forfeited innocence ? and why should this mean be prescribed in preference to any other ? Here I would observe that there are a thousand things in nature, which experience con-

vinces

vinces us answer the most valuable ends and purposes, and yet we cannot trace the effect to the cause, nor give a reason why the one produces the other. If God intended to pardon guilty mortals, it must have been in a way, which their finite minds could never investigate. The scriptures call the death of Christ a propitiation and atonement; now, if we believe this to be true in any sense whatever, we must believe that in this gracious constitution, the death of Christ is an essential and leading part. To reject therefore this plan of redemption, because we do not see the fitness of the mean to bring about the end, is saying in other words, we want to be as wise as God, and spurn his favours, because we do not comprehend his reasons for dispensing them. I shall here subjoin another remark. That, as all the divine institutions have a tendency to promote our present as well as future happiness, sacrificing numbers of the most prolific animals, seems to have been wisely instituted for the early world, to which animal food was prohibited; otherwise their numbers would have multiplied in such a degree, as to have consumed the food of man, and one part of the divine workmanship must have annihilated another. But as the world began to increase in numbers, and a greater quantity of animals became necessary for human subsistence, God so ordered it,

it, that *in the fullness of time*, by the sacrifice of his own son, a total stop was put to the killing of living creatures, excepting for the sake of food alone. Whoever therefore, for the sake of wanton cruelty, kills or puts to torment, any part of the inferior creation, is guilty in the sight of God, who made every creature to enjoy a portion of happiness suited to its condition.

We shall now return to the history itself, which informs us, that *in process of time Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstling of his flock, and of the fat thereof.* What is here rendered in process of time is in the original, *at the end of days*, i. e. of the year. Sacrifices were probably offered to the Lord every sabbath, and this at first might constitute the greater part, if not the whole of public worship. Yet there might be stated times, when these sacrifices were offered in a more public and solemn manner, as * Moses commanded the Israelites to observe a festival unto the Lord at the end of the year, in order to thank him for his goodness, in allowing them to gather in the fruits of the earth. On some such solemn occasion, the two brothers came with their different offerings to the Lord.

* Exod. xxiii. 16.

As there were solemn times for making their devout acknowledgments to God ; so it is more than probable, that there was some * stated place where they assembled for that purpose. The word *brought* in the original language, is never used in relation to any private or domestic sacrifice, but always in relation to those public sacrifices, which were brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Thus Moses says, † *he shall bring the bullock to the door*, &c. Doubtless therefore the sacred place where religious homage was paid, was marked out in those early days, by some visible appearance of the divine glory, or what the Jews called the *Shechinah*, which afterwards took up its abode in the Tabernacle and in Solomon's Temple. It appears from many parts of the sacred writing, that even after the fall, God held communion, and kept up an intercourse with mankind ; yea he held a conference with Cain, in such a manner, as shews that it was no extraordinary thing.

When men were not so numerous, as to prevent them all from assembling together, probably the *Shechinah* statedly appeared among them every sabbath-day. But when their numbers increased, and they could not all come together once a week,

* Taylor's Scripture Divinity.

† Lev. iv. 4.

but were obliged to perform public and social worship in separate places, the *Shechinah*, or divine presence might still keep its original station, where Adam with his family attended upon divine service, and received such oracles as were necessary to instruct them in different parts of their conduct; and in the neighbourhood of which the patriarchs descended in a right line from Adam, had their place of residence.

* Each of the brothers acted the part of a priest, in offering their own oblations; which verifies the antient saying, that every man is king and priest in his own family. Nevertheless, when many families united under one head, or governor, the sole right of sacrificing devolved upon him, as the common father of the whole. Thus Melchisedec was both king of Salem, and priest of the most high God. This privilege however was afterwards withdrawn from the Israelites, and by the law of Moses none were permitted to offer sacrifices, but the family of Aaron.

But we are told, *The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.* There are various opinions, as to what was the occasion, of the difference of respect which the Lord shewed to the offerings of

* See Patrick in Loc.

Cain and Abel. The ritual of worship under the law of Moses, seems to be nothing more, than the original institution enlarged and improved. Now it appears from this law that the first fruits of the ground were to be offered to the Lord, and flour and meal which are also likewise its produce; therefore Cain's offering could not be unacceptable to the Almighty on its own account. Some indeed say, that he gave only with a sparing hand, and that his offering was of the poorest and meanest parts of his produce: and they gather this from Abel's sacrifice being contrasted with his brother's, and described as the choicest and fattest of his flocks. But others*, allowing the maxim of the Jewish church to have taken place from the first institution of sacrifice, that † *without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin*, are of opinion, that Cain came into the presence of God as a righteous man, and offered the fruits of the ground, only by way of thanksgiving; while Abel came a petitioner for grace and pardon, and brought the atonement appointed for sin. The Apostle Paul plainly assigns the reason why there was a preference given to Abel, when he says, ‡ *By faith Abel offered unto God, a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness,*

* Sherlock on Prophecy. † Heb. ix. 22. ‡ Ch. xi. 4.

that he was righteous; God testifying of his gifts. Abel's faith could be nothing but a reliance on the promises and appointments of God, which Cain wanted. And this shews us, that true religion ever since the fall, has been one and the same, ever subsisting on the same principles of faith. It is evident, that this distinction between the offerings of Cain and Abel, must have been notified to all present by some visible sign or signal given by the Almighty. This was probably a stream of fire issuing out from the Shechinah, which consumed Abel's sacrifice. Thus we are told, a * *smoking furnace, and burning lamp*, i. e. the Shechinah *passed between the pieces* of the sacrifice, and consumed them, in confirmation of the covenant made with Abraham. There are many examples of this kind in sacred history. † As when Moses offered the first great burnt offering. ‡ When Gideon offered upon the rock. § When David stayed the plague. || When Solomon consecrated the Temple. ¶ When Elijah contended with the Baalites. And the Israelites, wishing prosperity to their king, ** pray that God *would accept*, it is in the original, *turn into ashes, his burnt offering*.

* Gen. xv. 17.

† Lev. ix. 24.

‡ Judg. vi. 21.

§ 1 Chron. xxi. 26.

|| 2 Chron. vii. 1.

¶ 1 Kings

xviii. 38.

** Ps. xx. 3.

The above transaction, happening before the whole assembly of Adam's family, created the greatest disgust in the mind of Cain. He could not bear the thoughts of being degraded below his younger brother. It is said, *He was wroth, and his countenance fell.* Upon which the Lord gave him this rebuke, *If thou doest well, shall not thou be accepted? If thou doest not well, sin lieth at thy door, i. e. the punishment of thy guilt is at hand, and ready to fall upon thee.* In the opinion of some, the word *sin* here means, a *sin offering*. Then the sense would be this, If thou hast offended me, thou may readily find a sacrifice, which I have appointed to be slain for the atonement of sin. It is added, *To thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.* intimating, that he should still retain his right of primogeniture.

But the mind of Cain brooding over the public affront which he had lately received, pushes him on to a spirit of malice and resentment against his innocent brother. Accordingly we are told, that *he talked with his brother Abel.* Asked him in a friendly manner if he would take a walk into the *fields* with him: and when he had drawn him from company, and had him alone, *he rose up against him, suddenly attacked him, and slew him.* He first wounded him with some weapon, which he

he had prepared for the purpose, and then put him to death.

And the Lord said unto Cain, (this might probably happen next sabbath, when Abel's place in the assembly was found empty, and many inquiring after him) *Where is thy brother?* Not that he was ignorant, but with a view to give Cain a due sense of his crime, and convince him, that nothing could escape his omniscience. Cain enraged, makes a rude return to his Maker, and tells him he was not his *brother's keeper*. But the Almighty proceeds to pass sentence upon him, and introduces it with these words, *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground*. The word blood is in the plural number, and bloods always are applied to murder, because it is not only taking away the life of one, but likewise of all his posterity, who are supposed to be in his loins. It is a common figure in sacred writing, to introduce lifeless and inanimate things, as speaking and uttering a language pertinent to the occasion; but especially innocent blood is often made to call out for vengeance*. The sentence follows:

* In the Book of the Revelation, vi. 9. it is said that *John saw under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, crying out, O Lord how long!* As the Jews said, that the life or soul was in the blood; nothing more is implied by this and similar visions, than that John saw the primitive martyrs as sacrifices for the truth, and beheld

And now thou art cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth, to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. There are two remarkable parts of this sentence, First the ground was to be cursed for his sake. This was an addition to the first curse imposed upon it. And no doubt but where he took up his residence, the soil was remarkably ingrateful and barren. Moreover, he was to be banished far from his father's family, and be deprived of all those privileges which he had formerly enjoyed. Then it would seem, the awful sentence brings him to a better way of thinking, and fills him with compunction for his guilt. For he acknowledges *his punishment was greater than he could bear.* But the words, in the opinion of some, are a question, and ought to be rendered, *Is my sin unpardonable?* Is there no remedy, no alleviation, or atonement for my crime? Fear is commonly the attendant of guilt: therefore after bewailing his rueful condition, he says, *Every one that findeth me shall slay me.* I shall be looked upon as a com-

held a great quantity of their blood, like that of the sacrifices under the law, lying at the foot of the altar; and he thought, as Abel's had formerly done, this blood now cried out to Heaven for vengeance.

mon

mon enemy; so that whosoever meets me, taking me for a dangerous person will kill me.

But God, who in the midst of deserved *wrath*, remembereth mercy, gives him a gracious assurance that his life should be spared, and to dispel his fears, and enable him to discharge the duties of his future life, he pronounces a severe denunciation against the man who should take away his life. *Therefore whosoever killeth Cain vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.* Seven is used as an indefinite number, but it implies what is very considerable. Therefore the sense of the words is, that God would punish the slaughter of Cain severely, and for a long time. He intended that the life of this wicked man should be prolonged in a miserable estate, to deter others from committing the like crime.

Then we are told, *The Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.* There have been a variety of opinions about the mark imprinted upon Cain, and many of these are so extravagant and ridiculous, that it is hardly worth while to enumerate or confute them. Some think he was branded with a mark, which signified him to be accursed. Others that he looked so frightfully that every person shunned him. Or that his head shaked continually, and he had a trembling in his whole body. Or that his face was blasted by
light-

lightening from the Lord. A learned critic * thinks, that God put on Cain, or ordered him to put on, a particular and remarkable garment, by which he might be easily known, and sufficiently distinguished from the creatures around him, that no one might kill him designedly, pretending at the same time ignorance who he was; or undesignedly mistaking him for a wild beast. I shall only mention another conjecture, viz. that the mark set upon Cain, was, that blackness of skin, which to this day, distinguishes a great part of the human species from the rest. Those who support this opinion (which I own is more probable than any of the former) suppose that Ham the undutiful son of Noah, married into the family of Cain, and that from this connection has proceeded the variety of different complexions to be found among men. One thing seems evident, that as far as the matter can be traced from history, all the negroes upon earth, are the descendants of Ham, and of him alone. And as murder, especially the murder of a brother is a most atrocious crime, it need not appear wonderful that the Almighty should perpetuate to posterity his abhorrence of it, and mark the first instance of defacing his own image in such a sen-

* Le Clerc. in Loc.

sible and indelible manner. But in the opinion of the most judicious critics, the words when properly translated, afford no ground for any of the above conjectures. The word here rendered *mark*, in no place of the Bible signifies a mark or brand impressed upon the body, but always some external assurance, or pledge given by God. Thus * the spies gave Rahab a token (the same word is here called a mark) that her life and the lives of all her relations should be preserved. The above passage then may be thus expressed, *The Lord set, or exhibited a token to Cain, that no one who met him should kill him.* This might be done, either by words, by an oath, or more probably by some outward sign, either on the earth or in the clouds. Thus God gave the † rainbow as a token of his covenant with Noah. And ‡ circumcision as a token of the same to Abraham. He gave § Jonathan a token, when to attack his enemies. He gave || Hezekiah a sign of victory over his enemy, by the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, going backward ten degrees, &c. Then we learn that Cain, by the force of the divine curse, *went out from the presence of the Lord*, i. e. out of the assembly, where the Lord appeared, and was worshipped; and never more enjoyed the blessings

* Josh. ii. 12.

† Gen ix. 13.

‡ Ch. xvii. 11.

§ 1 Sam. xiv. 10.

|| Isa. xxxviii. 8.

and advantages of living in his father's family and neighbourhood. *And he dwelt in the land of Nod.* The word *Nod* signifies a *vagabond*. The country where he settled had that name, from his wandering up and down in it for a considerable time. It was said to be on the *Eastward of Eden*. The sentence pronounced against the father drove him to the East of Eden, and it would appear that the son pursued the same rout after receiving his doom. Some render Eastward, before, or over-against, and think that Cain went to the Desert of Arabia. The next account of Cain is, that *he knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch : and he builded a city, and called it after the name of his son Enoch.* Josephus, the Jewish historian, says, that Cain became highly profligate and immoral, and built this city to secure his ill-gotten wealth. Others with greater probability, think that he built it to secure himself from wild beasts, or rather the attacks of those whom his guilty conscience made him dread. But this might be many years after he went to the land of Nod, when his family was greatly increased.

He called the name of the city, after the name of his son. Some think he declined his own name, because he knew it was become odious. But it is more likely, that he gave the city this name, out of the great affection he had for Enoch. This be-
came

came a custom in after-times. Thus, Nimrod called Nineveh, after his son Ninus. * The Psalmist observes the vanity of men calling their lands after their own names, and thinking by these means to perpetuate their memory. The sentiment is well expressed by our pious paraphrast :

- ‘ Yet, ’tis his inward thought and pride,
- ‘ My house shall ever stand ;
- ‘ And that my name may long abide
- ‘ I’ll give it to my land.
- ‘ Vain are his thoughts, his hopes are lost,
- ‘ How soon his mem’ry dies !
- ‘ His name is written in the dust
- ‘ Where his own carcase lies.’

WATTS.

Many have raised an objection against this part of Cain’s history ; and asked, where could he find a wife, and inhabitants wherewith to people a city ? To account for this, some have gone into a chimerical opinion, viz. that other men were created before Adam, called *Preadamites*, and that Cain in his travels met with some of these, married a wife among them, and his family became afterwards incorporated with them. But there is not the least occasion for any supposition of the kind. We are † informed that Adam begat a son when he was *one hundred and thirty years old*, and as it was common for mothers to name their children

* Psal. xlix. 11.

† Gen. v. iii. Ch. iv. 25.

as well as their fathers, Eve called him Seth, *i. e.* appointed. For God, said she, *hath appointed me another seed, instead of Abel whom Cain slew.* So it appears from this account, that Abel's death happened about the year of the world, one hundred and twenty-nine. Now, considering the first blessing pronounced upon our first parents to be *fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*; and considering the health and vigour of its first inhabitants; by this time mankind might have increased to a very great number. We find, that afterwards, when human life, and no doubt their strength were greatly curtailed, Jacob's family, which consisted only of seventy souls when they went down to Egypt, in little more than two hundred years, could muster * six hundred thousand fighting men. Cain might have had many children of his own, when he killed Abel; and as he was the eldest son, and as such, no doubt enjoyed privileges above his brethren, he might have had a large train of servants, and many connections, whom he could prevail upon to be his attendants on his journey, and share their fate with him.

I own, at first brothers were under the necessity of marrying their own sisters, till new regulations could afterwards take place; but it is more than probable, that there would be as great a distance in blood as possible; and if the tradition be true

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* Exod. xii. 37.

(which is not unlikely) that Eve commonly had twins at a birth, the alliance betwixt brother and sister would in a few years become pretty remote.

Perhaps some will think it an insuperable objection to the above *hypothesis*, that according to the history of Moses, most of the patriarchs were near one hundred years of age before they had children. But I would here remark, that Moses mentions exceeding few of the first inhabitants of the world. The reason was this, his principal view in writing the book of Genesis was to transmit to his countrymen a history of their ancestors, and to give a connected chain of lineal descendants from Adam, thro' whom the promised seed was conveyed to the tribe of Judah. Now it appears, that the elder branches of the same family were often passed by, in the determinate purpose of God, whilst the promise of the blessing thro' this seed, was conferred upon the younger. Therefore as the historian, in his genealogy of the patriarchs, mentions only the names of those who transferred the promise from Adam to Noah and to Abraham, and the names of such as were more immediately connected with them, it is probable, that when he says, such a man at such a period of life begat such a son, this very son, instead of being the eldest, might have been the youngest son of the family to which he belonged.

LECTURE VIII.

GENESIS V. I.

This is the Book of the Generations of Adam.

THE Jews called any catalogue or written record a Book: and by generations they understood, not only different pedigrees of men, but likewise all those incidents which were connected with their history. Altho' Moses styles this chapter *the book of the generations of Adam*, yet it contains only the names, and a few transactions of those patriarchs, who handed down the succession of the promised seed from Adam to Noah; which, as I have already remarked, was what the writer had principally in view. I shall now, agreeable to my intended plan, review the most eminent characters, recorded in this genealogy, and endeavour to throw upon this early period of the world, as much light as can be collected, from the few hints which Moses gives concerning it. But I would premise, that we here meet with several historical anecdotes, which the historian introduces and concludes in such an abrupt manner,

ner, that it is scarcely possible, to affix to them any positive and determinate meaning. The most probable reason for such remarkable brevity may be this, Moses happening to meet with some fragments of antient memoirs, faithfully transmitted them to posterity as he found them, without the smallest addition or variation whatever.

It is somewhat remarkable, that there are only seven generations of Cain's posterity mentioned. We have indeed some particulars recorded, relating to a few of these, with a view to shew us how soon mechanical inventions came into the world, which the Egyptians and some other people vainly assumed to themselves. But then we are not told, how long any of the family of Cain lived, or at what period they died, as if they had been a generation not worthy to have their names recorded in the book of the living.

It is said of * *Lamech*, the sixth from Cain, that *he took unto him two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah*. From these words many take for granted, that *Lamech* was the first, who ventured to transgress the original institution of marriage, and introduce polygamy into the world. But this is far from being certain, especially as we find some pious patriarchs in after-times adopting the same custom.

* Gen. iv. 19.

Marriage with respect to its outward form may be considered as a civil and political institution; consequently the time when, and the manner how it is to be celebrated, are regulated by human laws; and these may differ in different parts of the world. Yet, as marriage was at first expressly appointed by God himself, there is one part of it which is moral, and which no law nor practice among men can affect, namely, that mutual fidelity, that perpetuity of love and affection, which husband and wife solemnly pledge to each other. Therefore this engagement must surely come under the cognizance of the divine law.

After the days of Lamech, polygamy, or a plurality of wives was very common in the world, and is still practised in most parts of the East. On this subject I shall make the following remarks. That marriage should take place, between only one man and one woman, is evidently agreeable to the * first appointment of this ordinance in Paradise; is confirmed by † the words of our Saviour; and is best suited to the genius and purity of the Christian religion. If we consider marriage in a political view, it appears from the most authentic observations, that where polygamy is permitted, population does not so much increase, nor are the numbers of people so great, as in those countries

* Gen. ii. 24.

† Matt. xix. 5.

where

where this practice is forbidden. We have read of swarms of men pouring out from the North as from a hive, and over-running the whole of the Roman Empire, yet, among these people polygamy was punished by severe and sanguinary laws. But in my opinion, the strongest argument for one woman being assigned to one man, arises from the constitution of nature, which sends nearly an * equal number of males and females into the world. Now, upon the supposition of one man enjoying several wives, a proportional number of other men must be debarred of a privilege, to which all by nature have an equal claim. I know some learned men maintain, that in the early world, and in Eastern countries where polygamy has been permitted, the number of females born, exceeds that of males, so as to tally with this constitution; but this hypothesis remains to be established by well authenticated facts. And as it has been proved by the most accurate calculations, that the number of males rather exceeds the number of females, in every climate both of Europe and America, it is highly improbable that the

* The number of male infants exceeds that of females, in the proportion of nineteen to eighteen or thereabouts; which excess provides for the greater consumption of males by war, seafaring, or other dangerous and unhealthy occupations. Mor. and Politic. Philosoph. Art. *Polygamy*.

reverse should take place in any other part of the globe.

And Adah bare Jabāl: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and such as have cattle. The Hebrews call him, the father of any thing, who was the first inventer of it, or a most excellent master in that art. The pastoral employment was begun by Abel, but it seems to have been brought to much greater perfection by Jabal. For he invented and constructed tents, which in those hot countries, served as temporary houses for the shepherds, to defend them against the inclemency of the elements, and other dangers to which they might be exposed in wild and desert places. These tents they could easily remove, after their flocks had eaten up the grass in one place, and transport them to another, where richer pasturage was to be found. In short, it would appear, that Jabal improved upon all the former methods of breeding, feeding, and preserving cattle.

And his brother's name was Tubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp, and the organ. We are so constructed by our Maker, that certain tones and sounds give us far more pleasure than others; and there is no man whose organs are properly formed, who is not more or less susceptible of the powers of melody and music. The first of mankind having the whole of their bodily organs

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remarkably vigorous and strong, might perhaps feel musical impressions in a more exquisite manner, than their feeble and more frail posterity. Accordingly they clothed their history, their religion, and laws, with the garb of poetry and music; and thus by soothing the imagination, facts conveyed in this manner, became more deeply imprinted upon their memories. It seems Jubal was the first who invented musical instruments, in order to assist the human voice. These are said to be the *harp* and the *organ*. But as these two words include all stringed and winded instruments, the translators have rendered them the harp and organ, because they considered each of these, the most eminent of the kind.

And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron. This circumstance in a greater measure confirms a * theory which I proposed in a former discourse, respecting the curse upon the ground; and it is to me a clear demonstration, that the earth suffered some great convulsion before this period. I have already observed, that the natural cause, employed by the Almighty, for bringing about this event was probably a general eruption of subterraneous fire; that great and active agent, which on account of

* See Lect. VI. page 172.

its various and wonderful effects, may be stiled the prime minister of Jehovah in the inanimate world. During this awful scene, many of the heavier bodies on account of their resistance, would be protruded with the greatest force from their primordial stations, and when thrown above the surface of the earth would be the last of descending. A number of these denser bodies, happening to unite after their descent, would equally press upon the portions of matter beneath them, and form unto themselves a solid base; while others would sink deeper into a softer stratum, and remain in their first position, till the circumjacent soil, being carried away by floods, inundations, &c. they would then become exposed to the air; and by * the corroding influence of the elements, the growth of trees, and other causes, might be so altered, and forced from their primitive stations, as to form the slopings and declivities of mountains.

After this *catastrophe*, the surface of the earth would be covered with a great quantity of heterogeneous substances, and among other things, with the ores of different metals. These would remain a long time above ground, before their superior weight made them sink into the earth, or time incruited them over with coverings of different

* See De Luc's *Lettres Physic. et Moral.* Vol. II.

kinds. It is probable the sparkling appearance of these ores had long attracted the attention of the curious, till at last Tubal-Cain finding some parts of them accidentally fuse in the fire, set his inventive genius to work to make experiments, and at last found out the arts of making brass and iron. Which made his name celebrated for many ages after; in so far, that it is thought he was that Vulcan, whom the heathens worshipped as the god of the forge.

It is however clear from this part of Moses's history, that the use and management of metals was well understood at that time, for * copper and iron are of all metals with the greatest difficulty extracted from their ores, and cannot even in our days be rendered malleable without much skill and trouble; and it proves also that the arts in general were in an improved state among the antediluvians.

And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah. The Jews say, that she was the first who found out the arts of spinning and weaving. Which is not improbable; for when we reflect that her brothers were men of extraordinary genius and invention, it is natural to suppose that the sister would likewise possess accomplishments above the rest of her

* Watson's Chemistry.

fex. The origin of arts is often times casual, owing to some sudden thought, or lucky accident, which throws new discoveries in our way. But whether the early world had some supernatural assistance in finding out useful arts; or whether they were left to investigate them by their own genius, must ever remain to us an impenetrable secret: yet doubtless those inventions, which tend to supply the necessities, and alleviate the troubles of life, would be coeval with the first establishments of society. And considering what advantages the antediluvians derived from their longevity, for making experiments and improvements, it is highly probable that many arts were carried to a much greater degree of perfection before the deluge, than they have been since that æra. We may figure to ourselves, what degrees of light and knowledge would be imparted to the world from such men as a *Bacon* or a *Newton*, were they to live eight or nine hundred years. The knowledge of many useful arts no doubt perished at the flood with the inhabitants of the earth; it being scarcely possible, that one single family which escaped the general wreck, could have even had a superficial knowledge of every useful science or invention. Men may be truly pious, and yet at the same time not be the most inge-

ingenious. Cain's family exceeded Seth's in inventive knowledge so much as to be the only mechanics of the age. The barrenness of their soil might contribute to this part of their character; for necessity often serves as a spur to invention. When large societies are formed, and mutual intercourse prevails among mankind, it is scarcely possible for an useful invention to be lost, but were all the present inhabitants of the earth, excepting eight persons, to be suddenly cut off, how many arts which contribute to the subsistence of thousands would lie buried in oblivion, for a long space of time?

We are next presented with a speech of Lamech to Adah and Zillah. *Hear my voice ye wives of Lamech; hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged seven fold, then Lamech seventy and seven fold.* These words are some ancient fragment of a history, and have no connection with what goes before or follows after. Therefore it is impossible to say on what occasion, or for what purpose they were spoken.

The Jews had a foolish conceit that Lamech slew Cain. But had this been the case, how could he have said, that he had slain a young man, for by this time Cain must have been greatly advanced in years? Besides, instead of being punished,

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ed, he says that he should be avenged, *i. e.* others would be punished far more severely for killing him, than if they had killed Cain. The most rational conjecture about the intent of Lamech's declaration is this, * The murder of Abel had for a long time occasioned an animosity between the descendents of Seth and Cain, which had made the latter build a city, that his children might live near together, and be able more easily to unite for the common safety. And it happening that Adah and Zillah upon hearing some alarming news, acquainted their husband of the great danger he was in. When Lamech to compose their minds, and banish their fears, made unto them the following speech, which should begin with a question, and then may be thus paraphrased. Why should we make our lives uneasy with these groundless suspicions? And what have I done that I should be afraid? Have I slain a man young or old, or offered violence to our brethren of the other family? and surely reason must teach them, that they have no right to invade or hurt me. Cain indeed killed his younger brother Abel, but God was pleased so far to forgive his sin, as to threaten to take the severest vengeance on any one that should kill him: and if

* Shuckford's Connection. Vol. I.

so, surely they must meet with a greater punishment, who shall presume to kill me, or any of my innocent family. For if Cain shall be avenged seven fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold.

* And probably by discourses of this kind, and other arts which he made use of, he so far overcame the fears and shyness of the whole of his family, that thereafter, they ventured to commence an acquaintance with the rest of their brethren; till at last both became equally corrupted; which provoked God to inflict an awful punishment upon the whole.

Moses then drops the history of Cain's family, and acquaints us that Adam had another son, called Seth. It is probable that he was born very soon after the death of Abel, as Eve declared that God had given her another son in his stead. There is no doubt but Adam had a great number of children, that the purpose of God might be answered, in speedily replenishing the earth with inhabitants; tho' Moses mentions none of their names, because his ancestors were lineally descended from Seth, and he intended only to write their history. He tells us, that Seth had a son born to him called *Enos*, and that † *then, began men to call upon the name of the Lord*. Commentators give us three different senses of these words.

* Stackhouse's History of the Bible.

† Gen. iv. 26.

Some think the words should be rendered, *then men profaned in calling on the name of the Lord*, and that even Enos arrogated to himself a power, as if he had been a god: But this sense seems harsh and unnatural. There is nothing more unlikely, than that Adam's grandchildren, who lived under his own eye would so soon shake off parental authority, and apostatise from the belief and worship of the one true God.

Others think, that tho' men had hitherto worshipped God in private, yet they now instituted public assemblies, met in larger societies for solemn and social worship, and introduced liturgies and forms, for more effectually paying their homage to the Almighty. This indeed is a very natural comment from those, who place religion in modes, and set forms of worship. But it is scarcely credible, that Adam and his family had never met together to worship God till now, when we are told that Cain and Abel; and probably both their families along with them, brought their offerings to the Lord: this they no doubt did every sabbath day.

But others put a more consistent interpretation upon the words*, namely, that *men now called themselves by the name of the Lord*. The meaning

* Taylor's Scripture Divinity.

of which is, that about this period, the family of Seth, which adhered to God and his worship, began to give themselves a denomination, expressive of their relation and regards to him. They distinguished themselves from the irreligious family of Cain, and assumed the title of the *sons* or *children* of God: which designation was afterwards applied to them by Moses*; yea it was used after the flood†, and adopted by the ‡ writers of the New Testament.

Moses now proceeds to give us a list of Seth's descendents, in order to connect the chain between the first man, and the latter patriarchs of his own family: but he gives us no particulars, relating to any of their characters or transactions in life, excepting three, viz. Enoch, Lamech, and Noah. He only acquaints us at what time they were born, and when they died; to shew us the great length to which human life extended in this early period of the world. He begins his catalogue with Adam, the founder of this and every other family beside. He says §, *Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his own image, and called his name Seth.* When the Almighty created plants and animals, he imposed one great law on both,

* Gen. vi. 4.
 § Gen. v. 3.

† Job i. 6.

‡ 1 John iii. 1,

viz. that each should bring forth *after their own kind*. Owing to this law, the different species of creatures upon earth, are preserved from being changed, or blended into one another. Therefore, consistently with the established course of nature, it was impossible, that Adam could have a son, but after his own image, and in his own likeness. As he was the first of the human race, and had no father according to the flesh, he is for that reason called * *the son of God*; and being endowed with powers of body and mind, which gave him a superiority over every other creature, and in so far made him resemble his Maker, he is said by way of eminence, to be made in the image of God. But, as the Creator impressed this image upon the first man, to be the criterion of all his posterity above the inferior creation, therefore † all mankind are said to be made in the *image of God*, as well as Adam. Perhaps the reason why Moses mentions this circumstance, of Seth being in the likeness of his father, was to acquaint his countrymen, that tho' they valued themselves upon being the descendents of Seth, yet this their great patriarch, was only a frail and mortal man, as well as the rest of Adam's posterity.

Before the historian describes the age of any other person, he tells us what was the length of

* Luke iii. 38.

† Gen. ix. 6.

Adam's. *And all the days that * Adam lived, were nine hundred and thirty years.* From this account, it is evident that Adam lived far longer than any other man, mentioned in sacred history. For we are not to estimate his life in the same manner, as we do that of any of his posterity. The lives of other men are reckoned from their birth to their death: and many years elapse before they arrive at their prime, or what is called manhood. Yea the *climax*, or ascent of life to its meridian, is perhaps nearly equal to its descent to the grave. Now the first of these periods is to be subtracted from the life of Adam, who doubtless first appeared in the very prime and flower of his age; which age, is to be counted from that period to his death. So that in this view, he lived near twice as long as Methuselah, who was nine hundred and sixty nine years old when he died. Hence we conclude that his constitution was uncommonly healthful and strong. This may be accounted for, from his being the immediate workmanship of the Almighty, and his having so often eat of the tree of life, during his residence in the garden.

The next patriarch, whom Moses in the least characterises, is Enoch. He thus says of him, *Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God*

* Gen. v. 5.

took him. Enoch has been celebrated from earliest times, for his wisdom and his learning, not only among his own posterity, but likewise by many of the heathen writers. They say, he was the first who taught the knowledge of the stars; that he himself was taught by the gods; and was the same person who was afterwards called Atlas. The Mahometan authors say, that he received thirty books of revelations from God, wherein the secrets of the most occult sciences were written: and that he taught arithmetic and astronomy. Jews and Christians have generally believed him to be a prophet. This appears from the name which he gave to his son Methuselah, which meaneth, *he dieth, and the dart, or emission of waters cometh.* Accordingly the deluge happened in the very year in which he died. The Apostle Jude * calls him the seventh from Adam, *i. e.* in the genealogical line of Seth, to distinguish him from Enoch, Cain's son. And he mentions a remarkable prophecy emitted by him. *Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of his saints, or according to some versions, of his angels, to execute judgment upon all.* This passage is not taken from the history of Moses, or from any canonical book among the Jews, but from some antient collection

* Jude 14.

of traditions, highly esteemed in the Jewish church, which has been long since lost; and which book, probably contained many things relating to other patriarchs and prophets, as well as Enoch. The loss of this book was miserably supplied, by forging books under the names of the patriarchs, such as *Enoch; the life of Adam; the book of Seth;* and *the testaments of the Patriarchs;* all which, appeared in very early days of the church.

Moses says of Enoch, *he walked with God.* This phrase is very emphatic, and implies friendship and benevolence betwixt such as *converse* together. Therefore, an * apostle, when giving an account of Enoch's translation, says, *he pleased God:* and argues, that this was the effect of his faith, and hopes of a future reward. *For without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Thus, *pleasing God, coming unto him, and diligently seeking him,* are synonymous terms, and all included in the sense of *walking with God.* Hence we learn, that Enoch by faith, led a very religious and heavenly life. His thoughts and his affections were removed from *things below,* and set on *things above.* He had a deep sense of God and of his perfections

* Heb. xi. 5, 6.

habitually impressed upon his mind. He delighted in his ways, behaved as always in his sight, and constantly studied to please him and promote his glory. Some learned men are of opinion that Enoch frequently conversed with angels, who appeared, and gave instructions to many of the patriarchs of old: for such communications might be then necessary, to keep up a tolerable sense of religion among men.

Adam having continued nine hundred and thirty years a living monument both of the justice and mercy of God, and having been an eye witness of his power and providence, would not fail to instruct his children, in the important truths with which he himself was acquainted; but having died about fifty-seven years before this period, it would be an irreparable loss to the whole of his family, to be deprived of a head, to whom on every occasion, they might have recourse as to a venerable oracle. Besides, their hopes of a deliverance from death by the seed of the woman, would become faint and languid, when they had seen their great parent, and his pious son Abel, both return unto the dust. Therefore God who never left himself without a witness to the world, raised up in place of Adam a man of singular piety, and extraordinary knowledge, viz. Enoch; and by a miraculous and supernatural event, he

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convinced them of his providence in inspecting and rewarding his faithful servants, and taught them to look up to a better state than the present. For Moses says, *Enoch was not*, an expression which in other parts of scripture means, *to depart from life*. And he adds, *for God took him*. The Apostle Paul, in the passage already cited, explains this, and says, *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him*. I shall not mention any of those chimerical opinions which Jews and Christians have adopted concerning the manner of Enoch's translation, and the place to which he was carried. Doubtless, he was changed in the same manner as the last and pious inhabitants of the world will be, when *mortal puts on immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory*, and like them, became fit for joining the society of angels. Some think it probable*, that he was translated in a visible manner as Elijah was afterwards, by a glorious appearance of the *Shechinah*; from whence some heavenly ministers might be detached, to convey him to a better world. An ingenious writer observes†, That this translation of Enoch was an intimation to mankind, that, if they overcame the depravity of their nature as he

* Taylor's Scripture Divinity. Page 175.
 † Worthington's Essays, Page 72.

did, they should be delivered from the ill consequences of it, as he was ; the chiefest of which was death temporal and eternal, both which he avoided. And, * as the fate of Abel was an argument to their reason, so the translation of Enoch was an argument to their senses of another state of life. ‘ † If according to the Samaritan copy Adam was alive, it must have been a lively and affecting instance, of what he might have enjoyed, had he preserved his innocence, as well as an earnest of the victory over the evil one, who robbed him of it ; and a strong ground of confidence, that he and the rest of his posterity should not be left entirely under the power of death ; but some time or other be restored to the favour of their Maker, and behold his presence in bliss and immortality.’ Thus under the three great dispensations of religion, the *Patriarchal*, the *Mosaic*, and the *Christian*, God has given to the world a sensible proof of a future state, by translating some men, who had their souls and bodies united, into the invisible world. First Enoch, then Elijah, and lastly Jesus Christ.

The next patriarch, of whom any thing is mentioned besides his age, and his having children in common with the rest, is Lamech. It is said of him, *He begat a son, and called his name Noah*;

* Peter's on Job, Page 274.
Theory of Religion, Page 64. last edit.

† Bishop Law's

saying, *this same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.* Noah signifies *rest* or *refreshment*. Many are of opinion, that each of the heads of families recorded in this catalogue were endowed with a prophetic spirit; and that Lamech imposed this name on his son accompanied with the above declaration, as foreseeing the great advantages the world would receive under him.

I shall mention several opinions of learned men upon this subject, and leave it to every one, in this instance, as well as in every other, to judge for himself, and to embrace that opinion, which to him appears the most propable. * Some think that this speech of Lamech's, was nothing more than an expression of joy on the birth of a son. Some peculiar circumstances of his family, might lead him on this occasion, to express his hopes and wishes that his son would be a support and comfort to him: and there might be reasons too, for recording this speech, with which at this distance of time we are wholly unacquainted.

Those who look upon the name of Noah to be truly prophetic, are much divided in their sentiments, as to its intention. An eminent divine † endeavours to prove four things from the words

* Dawson on Genesis. † Sherlock on Prophecy.

of Lamech. 1. That the curse upon the ground subsisted in all its rigour in the days of that patriarch, and that from this declaration he himself felt it in a sensible manner. 2. That there was an expectation in his time, at least among those who had not forgot God, of a deliverance from the curse of the fall: and therefore Lamech points out his expectations under the child then born. *This same shall comfort us*, i. e. this is the *seed* of the *woman*, the heir of the promise; the effect of which shall be seen in his time. 3. That the ancient expectation, founded on the prophecy given at the fall, was not of an immediate and sudden deliverance. 4. That the world was not to be delivered all at once from the whole curse of the fall. Then in consequence of this exposition, it is maintained, that the prophecy has been verified in the event: that the earth has been restored from the curse laid on it, and now enjoys the blessings contained in the covenant made with Noah.

Others are of opinion *, that Lamech's prophecy has been fulfilled, by the enriching manure, which was thrown over the face of the habitable earth, at the time of the deluge; by the fertility of which mankind were comforted, *concerning*

* Clayton's Vindication, Part 2.

their work, and the toil of their hands, with regard to the ground which the Lord had cursed. It being well known, that the most stubborn and barren soil, will be fertilised, with slime, marle, sea shells, and a mixture of sand : which accounts for Noah's so soon planting a vineyard, and being intoxicated with the juice thereof.

The Jewish interpreters generally expound the words of the prophecy thus, *He shall make our labour in tilling the ground more easy for us* ; in that he shall be the inventer of several useful tools and instruments of husbandry ; but as brass and iron were found out by Tubal-Cain, doubtless all necessary tools, were brought to great perfection before Noah's time.

Some tell us*, that he received this name, because he first invented the art of making wine, a liquor that cheers the heart, and makes man forget sorrow, toil, and trouble.

† It is the opinion of others, that Lamech spoke these words at the birth of Noah, because God had informed him that this son, should obtain a grant of the creatures for the use of man : and knowing the labour and inconveniencies they were then under, he rejoiced in foreseeing what ease and comfort they would enjoy, when they should

* Patrick in Loc. † Shuckford's Connect. Vol. I. page 93.
obtain

obtain a large supply of animal food, over and above what they could raise from the ground by tillage.

Lastly, * some reason in this manner, Enoch's prophecy foretold the destruction of mankind without any glimpse of hope: but Lamech's prophecy implied a blessing to come by the piety of his son Noah; which, with every other blessing, was founded on the original promise to Adam. And as from Noah's loins a race of men was to be continued, among these would arise, *a man from the Lord*, who should bruise the serpent's head, and obtain a final victory over him. Thence the faith and hope of mankind relying on the original prophecy, was still kept alive.

The tenth and last, of this book or catalogue of patriarchs, was Noah himself; of whom it is said, † *He was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and he walked with God*. Noah has the same character with Enoch, but more amplified. For it is said of him, that he not only walked with God, but was perfect in his generation. Perfection both under the Old and New Testament, when applied to men, does not mean absolute and immutable purity, and immunity from every moral failing, but a freedom from the dominion of vice, and an

* Cockburn on the Deluge.

† Gen. vi. 9.

habitual

habitual course of sincere obedience. Therefore, the highest degree of holiness among men, is only of a comparative nature. Thus, Noah was said to be *perfect in his generation*, because his piety was not only superior to that of his contemporaries, but was singular and extraordinary, considering the depravity of those among whom he lived.

The most remarkable part of sacred history during this period, is, the longevity, or great length of age, to which men then arrived. There were ten generations of patriarchs before the flood. Of these seven lived above nine hundred years: one above eight hundred, and another above seven. Enoch seems to have been translated in the prime of his life; as he was then only three hundred and sixty-five years old. But the shortness of the father's age, was compensated to his son Methuselah. He is the oldest of Adam's posterity upon record; for he lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years. This might be owing to the strength of his constitution, and his leading a very regular and temperate life.

Some think, that the years of Moses were only lunar, *i. e.* months. But the futility of this opinion is very evident: because had it been so, Methuselah would have only been seventy-five years old when he died; and Abraham not quite
fifteen;

fifteen; tho' he is said to have died of a good old age.

Josephus the Jewish historian, and some * Christian divines are of opinion, that before the flood; and some time after; mankind in general, did not live to such a remarkable age, but only a few beloved of God, such as the patriarchs mentioned by Moses. They reason in this manner: tho' the historian records the names of some men, whose longevity was singular, yet that is no proof; that the rest of mankind attained to the same period of life, more than that every man was then of a gigantic stature, because he says, † *in those days there were giants upon the earth*. Besides, had the whole of the antediluvians lived so very long, and increased in numbers in proportion to their age, before the flood of Noah, the earth could not have contained its inhabitants, even supposing no part of it had been sea. And had animals lived as long, and multiplied in the same manner as they have done afterwards, they would have consumed the whole produce of the globe, and the stronger would have extinguished many species of the weaker. Hence they conclude, that for wise and good ends, God extended only the lives of the patriarchs, and a few beside, to such an extraor-

* See Warren's Geologia. Chap. 13. † Gen. vi. 4.

dinary length. If this was the case, it might be owing to the primeval fertility of that country where Adam and all the patriarchs of the line of Seth resided, and which, as I have * already observed, was probably freed from the effects of the curse laid upon the ground.

But most writers maintain the longevity of mankind in general in the early world, not only upon the authority of sacred, but likewise of profane history. And tho' it be difficult to assign natural causes for such a constitution, yet the moral reasons are more obvious. When the earth was wholly unpeopled, except by one pair, it was necessary to endow men with a stronger frame; and to allow them a longer continuance upon earth, for peopling it with inhabitants. In the infant state of every mechanical art, relating to tillage; building, clothing, &c. it would require many years experience to invent proper tools and instruments to ease men of their labour; and by multiplied essays, and experiments, to bring their inventions to any degree of maturity and perfection. Every part of their work must have been exceedingly arduous from such a penury and coarseness of tools, and must have required longer time and more strength of body, than afterwards, when

* Lect. VI. page 175.

mechanical knowledge was introduced into the world. If parents at this period, had not continued long with their children, to have taught them the arts of providing for themselves, and have defended them from the attacks of wild beasts, and from other injuries, to which they were exposed, many families would have been totally extinguished. But one of the best and most valuable ends, which longevity would answer, was, the transmitting of knowledge, particularly of religious knowledge to mankind. And thus, before writing was invented, or any such easy and durable mode of conveyance was found out, a very few men served for many generations to instruct their posterity, who would not be at a loss to consult living and authentic records.

There is no doubt but Almighty God; when he stretched out the life of man to many hundred years, made as much use of natural means, as he does now, when he prolongs our lives only to the age of three or four score. Many reasons have been given, to account for the amazing longevity of the antediluvians; such as the following: their having been newly made by God, and endowed with stronger constitutions; the pristine vigour of the earth, producing better and more generous fruits; the sobriety and temperance of their lives; their constant exercise and labour; their know-
ledge.

ledge of the virtues of herbs and plants; the simplicity and goodness of their diet, which consisted mostly of milk and vegetables. Now, that several or all of these may conduce to long life, appears from remarkable instances of * longevity in modern times. On the other hand, learned men assign reasons for the great brevity of human life, such as, a too tender education; suckling strange nurses; too hasty marriages; but above all luxury; high fauces; strong liquors, &c.

After the flood, God made a sensible change in the length of man's days, and hastened the period of human life, that the number of souls he intended to send into the world before the consummation of all things, might have a speedier probation.

I shall conclude this discourse with the following reflection, † Man in truth is a compound of † contradictions, he is apt to complain that human † life is short, and yet his time lies often heavy

* The learned Dr. Harvey mentions a man called Parr in Shropshire, who lived one hundred and fifty-two years and nine months. Another called Henry Jenkins, in Yorkshire, lived till he was one hundred and sixty-nine. And a man in the North of Scotland, called Laurence, married when he was a hundred years old; and when he was a hundred and forty, used to go a fishing in his little boat.

† Cockburn on the Deluge.

‘ upon his hands, because he knows not how to
‘ employ it usefully, or to any good purpose.
‘ He is desirous of long life, and yet by his follies
‘ and intemperance, cuts short the thread of life,
‘ and sees not half his days. He has daily spec-
‘ tacles of mortality before his eyes, and yet he
‘ never thinks of his own end, nor the uncertainty
‘ of his life.’

LECTURE IX.

GENESIS vi. 5.

And God saw that the Wickedness of Man was great in the Earth, and that every Imagination of the Thought of his Heart was only evil continually.

IN some systems, which are founded on the most unfavourable views of human nature, these words are considered, as a literal description of all mankind, before their minds are renewed by the irresistible influences of divine grace. But I would remark, that tho' such doctrines may be relished by people of dark and gloomy dispositions, who, like certain animals, hate to stir abroad in sunshine, but love to make their excursions under the cover of the night; yet in my opinion, we cannot offer a greater insult to the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty Creator, than to suppose him capable of filling this world with a race of such execrable beings, and bestowing upon them a nature, which makes every imagination of their heart only evil continually. That, human nature by the aids vouchsafed it, may rise to high degrees

degrees of purity and virtue; and on the other hand, by perverting the gifts of the Creator, may sink into the most abject state of moral pollution, is a truth established by the history of every age and nation of the world. The latter seems to have been the general character of mankind, for some time before the deluge. Their picture is drawn by the historian in strong colouring, and the features are of the worst and most forbidding kind; but it is peculiar to the age which he describes. For had the world in any subsequent period, produced a whole generation so very abandoned, that the thoughts of their hearts were continually set upon evil, there is no doubt, but the righteous Governor of all, would have exterminated them also, by some general judgment, similar in its effects to the flood of Noah.

Assisted by the scanty lights which Moses gives us relating to this period, I shall now endeavour to point out some of the principal causes, which contributed to that universal corruption and depravity of morals, which prevailed in the antediluvian world. It is the general opinion of divines, that the posterity of Seth continued for a long time a distinct and separate people from the family of Cain; and the Easterns had a tradition that Adam before his death, called his children and family together, and in the most earnest manner

ner cautioned them against the influence of bad example, and the danger of associating with the race of Cain. It seems they at first religiously observed their father's admonitions, in so much that they took a new name. They called themselves by the *name of the Lord*, or in other words, *the sons of God*.

Moses afterwards informs us, * *When men began to multiply*, i. e. when the earth was filled with inhabitants, and tribes formerly living remote, began to approach nearer to one another, *Daughters were born unto them*, meaning in greater abundance than formerly: which seems to hint, that at this period, there were considerably more females than males born into the world. Some think that Moses, being now about to mention the wickedness of the antediluvians, introduces the posterity of Cain, as being the chief cause thereof; and that he styles them *men*, and *daughters of men*, because they were *sensual* and *earthly*; in which sense the word *men* is sometimes used in the scriptures.

The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose. These words have given rise to many absurd and ridiculous comments both of Jews

* Gen. vi. 1, &c.

and Christians. There are two meanings affixed to them, which to me appear the most probable, I shall mention both, and leave the reader to his own choice. Whenever the name of God is added to any thing, it not only denotes God's being the efficient cause, but it heightens and increases its usual meaning. For which reason any thing that is excellent in its kind, or uncommonly lofty and magnificent, was by the Jews said to be of God, or of the Lord. Thus the angels are called the *sons of God*. And Adam being created with a nobler image than any other creature, is said to be made in the *image of God*. The cedars of Lebanon are called the *cedars of the Lord*, and great mountains the *mountains of God*. Therefore by the sons of God in this place are meant men of great opulence, power, and authority. And by way of contrast, the historian introduces those of poor and mean circumstances in life, and calls them the *daughters of men*. The words thus explained, are not an unlikely description of that dissolute age. The great and mighty in this world are commonly most addicted to sensual gratifications, because they have so many incentives to inflame their passions, and so few restraints to curb them; and instead of using their power, to punish and discountenance vice, are too often the greatest examples and promoters of lasciviousness
and

and debauchery. Thus, these *sons of God*, these great men, when they happened to meet with the daughters of their inferiors, gazed upon them as fit objects to gratify their lust, and from among these they *took to themselves*, in a forcible manner; *wives*, or as it may be rendered *concubines*, of all that they chose, whether married or unmarried, without ever asking their consent. No wonder then that the earth should be *filled with violence*, when the highest rank of men were above the restraint of law, of reason and religion, and not only oppressed the poor, but with impunity treated them and their children in such a base and cruel manner.

But there are other writers, who cannot relish the above opinion; because they think it a harsh and unnatural construction, to call great and powerful persons the *sons of God*, and all mean and plebeian women, the *daughters of men*. Besides, the text does not say, that the *sons of God* offered any violence to these inferior women, but saw that they were *fair*; and made choice of them for wives. And wherein is the heinousness of the offence, if men of a superior rank marry their inferiors, especially when an excess of beauty apologises for their choice? Or why should a few unequal matches be reckoned among the causes of bringing upon the world an universal destruction?

M m

tion? For these reasons many are of opinion, that the descendents of Seth, who were stiled the sons of God, on account of their near relation to him, saw the daughters of men, *i. e.* the impious progeny of Cain, and by intermarriages became associated with them; and surrendering to those enchantresses their hearts and their freedom, they surrendered at the same time their virtue and their religion. From this union proceeded effects similar to what has happened ever since. When a pure society mixes with a profane, the better principles of the one become soon tainted by the evil practices of the other; which verifies the old adage, *Evil communication corrupts good manners.* God gave a special injunction to the Israelites against intermarrying with their wicked neighbours. * *Thou shalt not make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.* The reason assigned was not peculiar to the Israelites, but may be applied in a general sense: *for they will turn away thy son from following me, that he may serve other gods.* And an apostle exhorts Christians, *not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers*†. *For what fellowship,* says he, *bath righteousness with unrighteousness; what communion bath light with*

* Deut. vii. 3.

† 2 Cor. vi. 14.

darkness; or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Thus it appears, that the great source of universal degeneracy, was owing to the posterity of Seth mingling with the progeny of Cain, in opposition to what their pious fathers had strictly charged them. An oriental writer mentions some early traditions about this subject; among others, this was one, that the Sethites used to swear by the blood of Abel (which was their common oath) that they would never have intercourse with the descendents of Cain. Another tradition was, that they were inveigled to break this oath, by the beauty of Naamah, Lamech's daughter, and the music of her brother Jubal; for the Cainites spent their time in feasting, music, dancing, and sports, which allured the children of Seth to come down and marry them; whereby the earth was soon polluted with impiety and impurity, with rapine, and with violence. The Apostle Jude seems to confirm the above comment, when discoursing about false teachers, who seduced and defiled the minds of others, he says, * *Wo unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain.*

It is afterwards said, † *There were giants in the earth in those days: and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and*

* Jude 11.

† Gen. vi. 4.

they bare children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown. Translators are not agreed about the meaning of the word *giants*. Some render the word, *violent and cruel men*, others, men who *fall upon and rush forward*, as a robber does upon his prey: the meaning then is, that they were not more remarkable for their strength and stature, than for their violence and cruelty. It is generally agreed, that in the first ages of the world, men were of a gigantic stature; tho' Moses does not mention them as giants, till after the union of the families of Seth and Cain, when men used their superiority in bodily strength, for the purposes of gratifying their unhallowed passions. Even after the flood, when human life was shortened, and perhaps the constitution impaired, we meet with men of the above description. Yea we are told, there were some nations of great bodily stature. The spies sent by Moses to view the promised land, upon their return give this account of the inhabitants,

** All the people that we saw in the land, were men of a great stature. And there, we saw the giants the sons of Anak, and we were in our sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. The Amorites are thus described, † Yet destroyed I the Amo-*

* Numb. xiii. 33.

† Amos ii. 9.

rites before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and they were strong as the oaks.

* *Og King of Bashan* was nine cubits high, that is, thirteen feet and a half. The height of † *Goliath* was only nine feet and a span, yet his breast plate weighed above two hundred and eight pounds ‡, and the blade of his lance twenty-five pounds. Even in modern times there are instances of men of a very great stature. And we find in many places of the world, what some think monuments of the strength of former times; such as huge masses of stone, brought from a considerable distance, artfully piled up, and poised with amazing exactitude §. These works must have been effected by main strength, as the knowledge of mechanical powers could not be introduced into the world at such an early period, and afterwards be lost; neither is it probable, that improvements in one branch of knowledge could be carried to such a degree of perfection among a rude people, who were strangers to every other liberal art and science.

At this period of the world, and long after, political power and bodily strength, went hand in

* Deut. iii. 11. † 1 Kings xvii. 4, &c. ‡ See Buffon's Nat. Hist. Vol. 9. Art. Giants. Many believe the gigantic size of the Patagonians. § Witness Stonehenge in Salisbury Plains.

hand together. Whoever was able to encounter and kill a fierce and dangerous wild beast, and clear the country of noxious animals; or who was able in the day of battle to destroy most of his enemies, was looked up to, by the rest of his companions, as the fittest to be their leader and commander. Thus, Nimrod, from being a *mighty hunter*, became a great king, and grasping at power, was never satisfied till every obstacle to his ambition was removed. And it appears from history, that all his successors have pretty nearly trodden in the same path. These *giants* then, or *sons of God*, might be the chief warriors, who formed themselves into chosen bands, and living among a cowardly and effeminate people, had no curb to their cruelty and lust. From them might spring an illegitimate race, resembling their fathers in body and mind, who, when they grew up, having no inheritance, would be turned loose upon the world, and follow no other employment but theft, rapine, and plunder. Thus they became *mighty men*, and *men of renown*; and *procured themselves a name*: but this was owing to the mischief they did, and the feats of savage cruelty which they performed.

There were several things peculiar to the state of the old world, which contributed to that corruption and depravity of morals, which so universally

versally prevailed. 1. Want of polity, and laws established by authority. That, government of one kind or other is necessary for the well-being of mankind, is evident from the nature of man, and from the history of the world in general. And yet we have not the least hint of any political institution before the deluge. We find in the case of Cain that murder was left to be punished, as God in his providence should think fit. And if murder, much more every lesser instance of injury. It seems probable, there were no separate states, nor regular governments among the antediluvians. But that as they spread over the face of the earth, and removed farther from the place of public worship, they lost a sense of God, without which no government can be supported; lived in anarchy, and exercised violence, as they happened to be instigated by lust, avarice, and revenge. It appears from sacred history, that regular laws and government never were established, till the ruin of the world demonstrated the necessity of it. 2. A general depravity of morals, would be more easily disseminated among the antediluvians, from their having but one language. This appears to be a necessary vehicle, for communicating knowledge as well as error and vice to mankind in general. Thus, that the apostles of Christ might be qualified for preaching the gospel to

to all nations, they were endowed with the gift of tongues. And we find that the posterity of Noah were no sooner increased to a great number, when the schemes of one, or of a few men, could be easily communicated to the whole, than God introduced among them a plurality of tongues, in order to divide them into distinct societies, and thereby prevent such a total depravation for the future. 3. Another great cause of the increasing corruption and wickedness of men in the old world, was their *longevity*. Death was at a prodigious distance, when life was prolonged near a thousand years. Men then lived as if they had been to live for ever. Their motto was, *Soul, take thine ease for thou hast many years to live*. It does not appear, that before the flood any judgments from Heaven cut short the natural term of human life. Therefore, * *because sentence against an evil work, was not speedily executed, the heart of the sons of men was wholly set in them to do evil*. The extraordinary length of life among the first of the human race, was a wise constitution of providence, for peopling the world; for bringing arts to greater perfection; and transmitting to posterity the knowledge of religion; but this very longevity, which was intended as a blessing to mankind,

* Eccl. viii. 11.

was soon by their sensuality and obduracy of mind, converted into a real evil. The inhabitants of the world, being then divided among lewd and lawless leaders, called *giants*, it was in the power of such, both by their example and authority, to disseminate vice and immorality among the inferior ranks, who are but too often subservient to the will and pleasure of their superiors. And their length of lives enabled these *despots*, to cherish the malady so long, that at last it became incurable, and nothing less than a total excision could remove it. If providence permit a tyrant to arise, whose sole aim is to ruin and oppress his fellow creatures, and by riches and power to corrupt his votaries, till they become fit tools for his ambition, what would be the consequence if the same tyrant, should pursue the same lawless career for the space of a thousand years? But providence, in pity to the miseries of mankind, cuts off such scourges by death, and bounds their vices, and their years within a term of no long duration.

4. The high degree of health among the antediluvians might be another, occasion of their being so dissolute in their morals, and so much addicted to sensual indulgences. When life for a long time flows with one uninterrupted current of bodily health and vigour, the animal part within us, takes the lead of the rational. Then the true

balance being lost, man becomes sensual and irregular, and a slave to his appetites and passions. If mankind in their present state of frailty and mortality, subject to sickness and infirmities of various kinds, are so apt to lend a deaf ear to the admonitions of providence; no interposition of Heaven seems sufficient to cure the inhabitants of the old world of sin and vice, unless it were such as would either change their nature, or deprive them of freedom.

What were those peculiar crimes, which brought such an awful judgment upon this generation, we are left to trace, from the natural consequences of their condition and circumstances in life, and from those general terms in which Moses describes their vices. He says, * *The sons of God, took unto them wives of all which they chose.* Which plainly indicates that the higher class lorded it over the inferior, and in their treatment of them and their families, regarded no other rule or law, but the gratifying of their criminal lusts and passions. He afterwards says, *he also is flesh*, a very emphatic term, implying nothing less, than that they were lost to every sense of reason and religion, and totally immersed in carnal enjoyments. But Moses sums up the whole vices of that age;

in

* Gen. vi. 3.

in two things, when he says, * *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.* By corruption in this passage the Jews meant idolatry. They said Cain was the first idolater, and worshipped the sun, as the liveliest emblem of the *Shechinah* or divine presence, which he had often beheld, and from which he was for ever banished. But the Jews degraded Cain as much as possible, in order to exalt his brother Seth, from whom they were lineally descended. In my opinion idolatry had not begun to be practised before the deluge. So long as Adam lived, his instructions and authority, would be a sufficient bar to this vice. Cain himself had a supernatural communication with God, and the impression which this must have made upon him, would doubtless continue all the days of his life. Besides, it is highly improbable, that such an accurate historian as Moses, when mentioning the vices of the old world, would have overlooked the greatest of the whole, I mean, idolatry, had they been guilty of it. But by the earth becoming corrupt, nothing more is implied, than an universal degeneracy; men of all ranks and denominations being completely tainted with vice, as with a direful contagion. And to shew us, that the mea-

* Gen, vi. 11.

sure of the iniquities of that age, was completely filled up, the historian adds, *the whole earth was filled with violence*. The expression suggests, that tyranny, cruelty, and ambition, were at this time the predominant vices of men. Scripture informs us, * *That God hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the bounds of their habitations*. Therefore to rob our fellow creatures, and deprive them of those comforts and privileges, which God and nature hath bestowed upon them, is an open violation of conscience and character, and a daring insult to the righteous governor of the world; who in this respect has *never left himself without a witness*, but proved to mankind from the history of his providence, that scenes of rapacity, cruelty, and bloodshed, are never permitted to go long unpunished, but even in this world, draw down upon those who perpetrate them, a just, but often a severe vengeance. It is probable that murder, was a common and prevalent crime in the old world, as it was the first thing which was forbidden after the deluge. And the law then given was, † *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*. This seems to be the first institution of an established magistracy or government to be found on record.

* Acts xvii. 26.

† Gen. ix. 6.

Moses having represented the degeneracy of mankind to be so great as to cut off all hopes of amendment, introduces the Almighty as declaring, *My spirit shall not always strive with men, for that he also is flesh.* It is probable, that this oracle or admonition proceeded from the Shechinah, at a public or solemn assembly of the few, who adhered to their religion, and met together for the worship of God. Some critics render the words thus, *The life which I have given to man shall not continue so long in him as formerly, because they are fleshly, and their works are evil. Yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.* And to this period they think, human life was reduced in the days of Moses. This sense appears forced and unnatural; neither is it true, that in any subsequent period, the standard of human life was fixed at one hundred and twenty years. But by the *spirit of God*, may be here understood, all those exhortations and admonitions, which he delivered to the old world by the mouth of the patriarchs; such as Enoch and Noah: the same spirit, by which an * apostle says, our Saviour *preached to the spirits in prison*, (i. e. now detained in the state of the dead, and in safe custody to the day of judgment) *which sometime were disobedient in the days of Noah,*

* 1 Peter iii. 19.

while the ark was in preparing. My spirit shall not always strive, or debate, with man, seeing that really he is flesh, altogether carnal, and void of every virtuous principle. Nothing will reform him, neither will he attend to any methods of persuasion.

It is afterwards said, that *the Lord repented, and was grieved at his heart that he had made man.* While we remain in this embodied state, and can see God only in a dark manner *as thro' a glass*, we can have no idea of his nature, nor of the manner of his agency; therefore we are obliged to speak of him after the manner of men, and by analogy and comparison, describe his ways and judgments, in the same terms, in which we express human transactions in this world. The scripture therefore accommodates itself to our capacities, and ascribes to the supreme being bodily parts, such as hands, eyes, and feet; not that he has any similitude, but that he has power to execute every act, to which these parts in us are instrumental. In like manner, he is represented as having passions; as angry and pleased, loving and hating, repenting and being grieved, &c. and yet we cannot suppose, that Almighty God, *with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning*, can be liable to any emotion of mind, such as we feel from the prevalence of any passion whatever; there-

therefore the meaning of these, and such like expressions, can be nothing more, than that the methods of divine administration are so diversified, that the face and appearance of them resembles the effects of those different passions which agitate the human mind. Thus, he will as certainly punish the wicked, as a man inflamed with anger would punish his enemy when in his power, and as infallibly reward the righteous, as we would those for whom we have the highest love and affection. So, when he is said to repent and be grieved, the meaning must not be, that he perceived any thing of which he was ignorant before, (*for known to God are all his ways from the beginning*) but only that he was about to alter his conduct, as much as a man who repents of his former favours, and from being a steady friend is now an avowed enemy.

Moses mentions a remarkable declaration of the Almighty relating to man, when he says, *yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years*. I have already observed, that this is not likely to mean, the fixed period, to which his life should afterwards be reduced. It is more probable, that this revelation from God, was communicated to Noah, exactly one hundred and twenty years before the deluge. Some may object to this interpretation, because we read in the former chapter, that Noah was

was five hundred years old before he begat any of his sons, and he was six hundred when he entered into the ark, so that there was only one hundred years between these two periods. But Moses concludes the whole of his genealogy, or *book of generations*, before he enters on the corrupt state of the antediluvian world; in describing which, he alludes to transactions which happened even before some of the preceding patriarchs were born. Therefore, I presume, that the hundred and twenty years here mentioned, respect the time of God's forbearance to that guilty race; after which period, their trial would come to an end, and the sentence denounced against them would be put in execution. But it is remarkable, that before this event came to pass, the whole of the antient patriarchs were dead; for it appears, that Methuselah, who lived the longest of any, died the very year in which the flood happened.

The history of the early world suggests many useful reflections to posterity, and confirms the maxim of the wise man, That * *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach*, and it may be added with equal truth, the ruin of a people. When we peruse the history of past ages, and

* Prov. xiv. 34.

trace the rise and fall of every empire upon earth, we find this truth abundantly verified, That when a large community of men has been for a long series of years, immersed in luxury, immorality, and vice, it is as much in vain to look for a general reformation among such people, as it is for the old and sickly constitution of an individual to be restored to youthful health and vigour.—Bodily diseases when long continued must terminate in death; so epidemical vices when long indulged by the body politic, become incurable, and can never be removed, but by the dissolution of its government and laws.

LECTURE X.

GENESIS VI. 13.

And God said unto Noah, the End of all Flesh is come before me ; for the Earth is filled with Violence through them : And behold I will destroy them with the Earth. Make thee an Ark of Gopher Wood, &c.

IN my last discourse I considered the state of the world for some time before the deluge, when it appears from the few strictures which Moses gives us, of the condition and character of mankind during that period, that they had arrived at the highest pitch of moral depravity, of which human nature is susceptible ; in so far, that *the thoughts of their hearts were continually set in them to do evil, and the whole earth was filled with violence.* The truth of this part of sacred history is confirmed, by a tradition handed down among different nations, for many ages after, of a universal degeneracy prevailing among the human race ; and which the heathen poets called the *iron age.* One of them describes it thus :

All

All live by spoil, in safety none remain,
 The guest is by his wicked landlord slain,
 The son in law, pursues his father's life :
 The wife her husband murders, he the wife.
 The step-dame, poison for her son prepares,
 The son enquires about his father's years.
 Duty, with piety, expiring lies ;
 And justice wearied out with bloody cries,
 Last of the virtues, seeks her natives skies. OVID. MET.

When a race of creatures counteract all the wise and good ends of their creation, it is fit and reasonable that they should be destroyed. It must be inconsistent with the divine perfections, and the nature of his government, to make that life the object of his providential care, which is thus miserably perverted. Yea goodness itself, as well as justice, calls for the creation being purged of every thing, which proves to it a nuisance and corruption. Therefore, after the divine lenity and forbearance, instead of reclaiming mankind, had rendered them more bold and licentious, God declared to his servant Noah, that *the end of all flesh was come before him, and that he would destroy them with the earth*. But to him he says, * *with thee will I establish my covenant*. I must here remark, that divines often affix a crude and gross sense to the word *covenant* in sacred writing, when they explain and illustrate it, as a mutual compact

* Gen. vi. 18.

and agreement betwixt God and man. On the contrary, a covenant published by God to mankind, implies nothing more, than a free and gracious promise of favours which he would bestow upon them. Tho' Moses does not mention it, yet it is highly probable, that Noah had received some peculiar promise from God before this time, to support and encourage him, during the whole course of his ministry. And we may suppose, that this covenant would also relate to the promised seed, who was to come out of Noah's loins. However, the patriarch now receives an assurance, that his piety and approved fidelity should be rewarded, and be the occasion of himself and his family being preserved alive amidst the universal ruin. With a view to this purpose God delivers to him the following orders :

Make thee an ark of Gopher wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shall pitch it within and without with pitch. The word here rendered ark is found no where else in scripture, but in one place, where * Moses when an infant, is said to be put into *an ark of bulrushes, daubed with slime and pitch.* As this machine, whatever its figure was, saved Moses in the water, it probably got the same name with that which saved Noah in a simi-

* Exod. ii. 3.

lar situation. * Critics remark, that the word, here translated *ark*, comes from a root, which signifies to dwell or inhabit, and may therefore denote a *house* or *place of abode*. † And indeed if we consider the use and design, as well as the form and figure of this building, we can hardly suppose it to be like an ark or chest, wherein we usually store lumber, and many other things; but rather like a farm house, such as are in several countries, where the cattle and people live all under the same roof. As soon as men began to hew down timber, and to join it together, for the purpose of making houses, nothing can be considered a more simple kind of edifice, than what was made rectangular, with a bottom or floor, to prevent the dampness of the ground; a sloping cover or roof to carry off the rain; stalls and cabbins for the lodgement of man and beast; and a coat of bitumen or clay, to keep out both wind and weather. Of this kind was the building of Noah, which may be termed a place of abode, rather than an ark or chest, properly so called.

The ark was to be made of *Gopher wood*. What this tree was, has been much controverted. For the word *Gopher* is not to be met with in any other part of the sacred writings, and therefore cannot be

* See Le Clerc in Loc.
the Bible.

† Stackhouse's History of

explained by these writings themselves. Some will have it to be the cedar, others the pine, others the box, and others (particularly the Mahometans) the Indian plain tree. But most learned men are of opinion, that it was the cypress tree : for taking away the termination, *Cupar*, and *Gopher*, differ but very little in sound. That kind of wood abounds in the country, where it is probable the ark was built. For, when Cain slew his brother, he was exiled from his father's family ; and he and his descendants sought their dwellings elsewhere : but there is great reason to believe, that Seth and his descendents, continued in their father's abode, and the adjacent regions, or in other words in the land of Eden, which is generally agreed to be in Assyria and not far from Babylon. And as Noah was a descendent from Seth, in a direct line, there is no doubt but he dwelt in the same country. Cypress is so fit for building of ships, that an old historian * informs us, that Alexander the Great, when he was at Babylon, built a navy of the wood of these trees. Besides, there is no wood more durable than cypress, and its sap is so bitter and offensive, that neither worms nor vermin will touch or corrode it.

The next command to Noah, was to *make rooms* in the ark, *i. e.* little cabbins or cells, to separate

* Arrianus. Lib. 7.

the different kinds of animals from one another; to keep the clean from the unclean; and perhaps to store up their different kinds of food. Then he is ordered to *pitch it within and without*, or according to some versions, to *pitch it with pitch*. It is generally agreed, that this was a kind of slimy substance, called bitumen or asphaltus, which oozes or bubbles out of the ground in many parts of the East, but especially in the neighbourhood of Babylon; and this substance we are told*, was used as mortar to cement the walls of that city. It is of a remarkably glutinous quality, and when exposed to the air, or covered with water, it becomes exceeding hard, and never after loses its solidity. It would bind the materials of the ark closely together, and make it glide more smoothly on the water. This circumstance proves, that the ark was built at no great distance from antient Babylon; and that Paradise lay on the West of it, from the † flaming sword which was kindled up in this inflammable soil. Then the figure and size of the ark are described.

And this is the fashion which thou shall make it of; the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits; the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. There were three kinds of cubits

* Gen. xi. 3.

† See Lect. VI. page 175.

among the Jews. The common cubit measured from the elbow to the point of the middle finger, which is computed a foot and a half. The sacred cubit was a hand breadth more, *i. e.* about two and twenty inches. The geometrical cubit contained six of the common.

Some writers who figure to themselves the great quantity of room, necessary to contain all the creatures which went into the ark, have supposed, that the cubit here mentioned was the largest of the above measures. But this is highly improbable; for Noah and his sons could not have constructed such a vessel during their lifetime, and it would not only have contained the creatures which went into it, but all the inhabitants of a province besides. Therefore the generally received, and indeed the most probable opinion is, that the common cubit is only to be understood. And then the dimensions of the ark are as follows :

	Cubits.	Feet.	Yards.
The length	300 equal to	450 equal to	150
The breadth	50	75	25
The height	30	45	15

The limits of my work will not permit me to enumerate the different species of animals upon earth, nor to enter into geometrical calculations, about the capaciousness of the ark, and how its contents might have been stowed and arranged.

This

This subject would require a work by itself, and many ingenious writers have treated fully upon it. I shall only present the reader with the following remarks.

It is not to be supposed, that Moses was acquainted with all the different species of land animals, so as to make an exact calculation of the bulk of the ark, necessary to receive what it was to contain: and to make such an attempt, must have cost him infinite labour, and long application of thought. Therefore we may take for granted, that he faithfully related the fact as he had received it from his ancestors, who were not very remote from the flood.

Tho' Moses gives us nothing but the dimensions of the ark, it does not therefore follow; * that it might not have the convexity of a keel, (as many large flat bottomed vessels have) as well as a prow to make it cut the waters more easily. The design of the vessel was not for expeditious sailing, but for preserving its inhabitants; which it was more capable of doing, than if it had been built according to the best of our modern models; even supposing the waters had been ever so boisterous. Therefore we may conclude, that the structure of the ark was suited with wonderful art to

* Stackhouse.

the burthen it was to carry, and the weather it was to live in. On these accounts, perhaps it may be found upon experiment, the most complete, and perfect model that ever was devised. Yea, we are credibly informed, that about the beginning of the last century, * a gentleman on the continent, ordered a ship to be built, answering in every respect the description of Noah's ark; the length of it being one hundred and twenty feet, the breadth of it twenty, and the depth of it twelve. And tho' the plan at first was ridiculed, yet upon trial it was found, that ships built after this manner were, in time of peace, beyond all others, most commodious for commerce; because they would hold a third part more than those of the common construction; would not require a greater number of hands to navigate them; and would sail with greater expedition.

Men are apt to be deceived as to the quantity of animals which went into the ark, and think their number almost infinite. But when we except such as live in the water; such as proceed from promiscuous mixtures, and never generate again; such as change their colour, shape, and size, by changing their climate, and seem to be of different species, when they are not; their number is very

* Peter Janfon, a Dutch merchant.

much reduced. Of quadrupeds, or four footed creatures, which are by far the largest of the brute creation, there is not above two hundred and fifty species. There are already found out above two thousand species of * birds; but the greater part of these would be contained in no great space. As to the lowest class of animated beings, what an immense number of them might be confined within very little bounds? And even among the four footed animals, many of the lesser size, such as the mouse, rat, mole, &c. might find sufficient room in the ark, without any particular cells set apart for them. A very ingenious and learned divine†, who with great accuracy calculated the dimensions of the ark, and what number of creatures it might be supposed to contain, makes the following remark, That it appears more difficult to assign a sufficient number and bulk of necessary things, to answer the capacity of the ark, than to find sufficient room in it, for the convenient reception of them; and adds with great piety and truth, ‘ That had the most skilful mathematicians
‘ and philosophers, been set to consult, what proportions a vessel ought to have, designed for the
‘ same use, as the ark was, they could not have
‘ pitched upon any other more suitable to the

* See Latham on Birds. † Wilkins, Bishop of Chester.

‘ purpose, than these mentioned by Moses ; in so
 ‘ far, that the proportion of this vessel, does very
 ‘ much tend, to confirm and establish the truth
 ‘ and divine authority of his writings. Especially
 ‘ if we consider, that in these days, men were less
 ‘ versed in arts and sciences ; and the ark was in
 ‘ all probability the first vessel of any bulk, that
 ‘ was made to go upon the water : whence the
 ‘ justness of the proportion observed in its several
 ‘ parts, and the exactness of its capacity to the
 ‘ use it was designed for, are reasonably to be
 ‘ ascribed, not to bare human invention and con-
 ‘ trivance, but to the divine direction, expressly
 ‘ given to Noah, by God himself, as the sacred
 ‘ historian acquaints us ;’ who farther says,

A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above. From the last words, some have supposed, that the window was either a cubit square or a cubit high. But such a small window could never afford sufficient light to different apartments within the ark. Therefore it is thought, that the words, *in a cubit shalt thou finish it above*, do not allude to what is called a *window*, but to the finishing the ark above ; the roof of which was raised a cubit higher in the middle, than at the sides, that the rain might fall off with the greater ease and freedom. The word here rendered *window*, is not to be met with else-
where

where in the whole Bible, which makes it so difficult to find out its true meaning. It comes from a verb which signifies to *burn*, or *shine like oil*. It occurs sometimes in the plural number, and always signifies a bright and luminous body. Therefore some are of opinion that Noah, who, according to the oriental tradition, was a profound philosopher, prepared some self-shining substance, which emitted a perpetual light, and being placed in the center of the ark, sent abroad its rays to every part of it. Others again imagine, that as the word *window* may be translated light, there was a number of windows in the ark; or at least that there was in each story of it, a good deal of lattice work, not only that Noah might see to feed or clean the different animals, but that there might be a fresh circulation of air, which was necessary for the health and life of the whole.

And the door shalt thou set in the side thereof. No doubt this door would be in the form of a large porch, that the animals might enter with the greater freedom. It would probably be placed in one of the long sides, and so constructed, that the creatures could have easy access to it; and when they entered, could either ascend or descend, by some contrivance for that purpose, to the places where they were to take up their different stations.

With

With lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. Upon the supposition, that the ark was divided into three equal partitions, then, allowing the thickness of a cubit for each floor, every story would be just nine cubits high, or thirteen feet and a half. Hence we may form some estimate of the height of Noah and his sons. Most * writers agree that in the early world, men were of a large stature, as well as of great longevity. Antient historians mention men of an enormous stature. The heathen poets, must have built their fables about the giants, upon some foundation in truth; and skeletons found in modern times confirm the above opinion†. Now as it would have been very inconvenient for Noah and his family, who would have occasion to be in all the stories every day, and perhaps often in a day, to be obliged to stoop all along; so, on the other hand, had men in those days been no taller than what they are at present, so great a height of the ark would have been very unnecessary. If we then suppose the men about ten or eleven feet high, the remaining two or three feet would be sufficient to allow free air, both to them and to the animals.

Men of learning and of a mechanical genius, have been at great pains to arrange the different

* See Whiston's Original Records, Dr. Molineux, Lowthorp's Abridg. &c. † See Buffon's Nat. Hist. Vol. 9.

species of creatures in the ark, to find for them a sufficiency of air, light, food, room, &c. but all these were provided for by that great mechanic, whose wisdom and power founded the vast universe, and whose bountiful providence supplies the wants of every being therein. To me the following arrangement is the most natural. In the upper story, resided Noah with his family, and all the different kinds of birds and fowls. The second, contained what provisions were necessary for the whole. In the third, were lodged all the four footed and larger animals. And in the hold of the ark, there might be sufficient room for insects and every creeping thing : and these might feed upon the dung of the animals, which fell down from the story immediately above them.

But over and above the capacity of the ark for holding its contents, there must have been a great deal of empty space among the animals, to allow a free circulation of air, or what is more probable, there must have been contrivances for introducing fresh air, similar to ventilators. A learned physician has the following observation on this subject* : ‘ The effluvia of human live bodies, (the same, in some degree, may be said of other animals) are extremely corruptible ; and so is

* Dr. Arbuthnot.

‘ the water, in which people bathe, by retaining
‘ cadaverous smells. Less than three thousand
‘ human creatures, living within the compass of
‘ an acre of ground, would make an atmosphere
‘ of their own steams about seventy-one feet high,
‘ which if not carried away by winds, would turn
‘ pestiferous in a moment. Owing to this cir-
‘ cumstance, the air of prisons, often produceth
‘ mortal diseases, and ship’s crews turn sickly in
‘ bays and harbours, which would be healthy in
‘ the open seas.’

Noah would not only be under the necessity of laying in a stock of fewel, and provisions for himself and family, during their abode in the ark; but likewise of water and food for all the creatures in it. It may be said, what occasion was there for Noah providing water before he entered into the ark, could he not easily have collected rain water, or taken in from the flood itself as much as he had occasion for? But in answer, I would observe, that it only rained forty days; and had he during that period collected a sufficient quantity, it would have scarcely continued sweet and fit for use for a whole year. And when the flood began, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, the floating waters upon the earth, would be so brackish and muddy, that neither man nor beast could drink of them.

Not

Not to insist, that it would have required more time and labour, to draw in water for all the animals, than perhaps Noah and his family could well spare, as the window in the upper story was thirty yards above the surface of the deep. For these reasons, it is probable, that Noah laid up a necessary quantity of water in the ark before he entered into it.

Some have imagined that a great number of living animals would be kept in the ark, for food to the carnivorous and rapacious kinds. But Moses informs us*, that at first, God made a grant of nothing but fruits and vegetables, to serve as meat to men, beasts, and birds. For it was not, till after the earth had lost its primitive vigour and fertility, that this grant was extended to animal food. And it has been proved beyond controversy, that the stomachs of carnivorous animals, are suited for the digestion of plants and herbs. Yea, there are well authenticated instances, of some of the most ravenous kinds, having lived a considerable time on grass and vegetables. The evangelical prophet alludes to this circumstance, when he celebrates the peaceful reign of the Messiah. † *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the*

* Gen. i. 29.

† Isa. xi. 6.

calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. But the inhabitants of the ark, would probably consume a far less quantity of provisions, than when they enjoyed their free and natural range; for now being closely shut up, and such numbers crowded into one place, they would breathe a gross and noxious air, which, joined with the continued agitation of the ark, must have greatly pallied their appetites, and prevented digestion. I may add to the above remarks, that Noah would take, or rather the Almighty would bring to him, the least of every species, as these would be more easily provided for in the ark, and be more suitable to the state of the world after the deluge.

Thus I have endeavoured to shew, that the ark could have contained a pair of all the different species of animals just now upon earth; but probable reasons will be assigned in a subsequent lecture, why they did not all enter into it. And it appears from well attested facts*, that

* In America, some years ago, there were dug up in a salt marsh, near the River Ohio, several skeletons of animals of an enormous size. One tooth, belonging to a large roe, weighed upwards of eleven pounds. A thigh bone of a quadruped was found in the same place, which was some inches above four feet in length. Buffon's Nat. Hist. Vol. 9.

several kinds of creatures, which existed in the old world, were totally destroyed by the deluge; especially some of the most gigantic size, which could not have entered into the ark; and had their breed been preserved, they must have been highly prejudicial to the earth as it now is. Hence we are led to conclude, that in the antediluvian world not only the human race, but even the brute creation, * were of a larger stature than they have been ever since.

We are informed that Noah received this command, † *Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female; to*

In the year 1783. A skeleton of a huge animal of the deer kind, was found in an estate belonging to Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, and which is now in his Lordship's possession. It was discovered in a marle pit, under a peat moss, surrounded by a stratum of sea shells, and other marine productions. The horns were seven feet and one inch long; the length of the skull one foot eleven inches; the breadth of the forehead above the eyes, eleven inches; all the bones were of a gigantic size; not in the least petrified; but appeared as fresh as if the animal had only died a week before. None of the above species now exist, otherwise their extraordinary size would soon make them known.

* In Siberia, in America, and other parts of the world, are found skeletons of the elephant, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, &c. of far greater magnitude than the bones of any of these animals now existing.

† Gen. vii. 2.

keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. This distinction between beasts that were clean and unclean, has inclined some to think, that Moses wrote this history after he came out of Egypt, and delivered the law to the Israelites. But I am of opinion, that, tho' the distinction concerning human food being clean or otherwise, did not take place till after the giving of the law, yet from the beginning, such creatures were denominated clean, as were appointed by God himself to be offered up in sacrifice to him. And it seems by the law of Moses, the number of such was but small. Of quadrupeds, none were to be offered but * *bullocks, sheep, and goats* : and among birds, only two kinds, viz. † *turtle doves and young pigeons*. The reason why so many clean creatures were taken into the ark, was, that Noah might not only have wherewith to sacrifice to God, but likewise wherewith to subsist himself and his family till the deluged earth once more came to yield its increase. A dispute has arisen among critics about this passage. Some think that there were only seven individuals of the clean which went into the ark, and that the odd one was designed for sacrifice. Others with more probability maintain, that there were fourteen of the clean,

* Lev. xxii. 19.

† Ch. i. 14.

because

because it is in the original *seven and seven*; and Moses repeats it that they went in by pairs, viz. *male and female*.

Having already considered the body and contents of the ark, I shall now bestow a few remarks on some other circumstances relating to this memorable transaction.

Many have adopted an opinion, that Noah was one hundred and twenty years in building the ark, and preaching up repentance to a sinful world. * But there are sufficient reasons to believe that this could not be the case. God indeed promised the old world a respite of one hundred and twenty years, from the time he published his first intention of destroying it; but it will not thence follow that Noah was all that time employed about the ark. To give us a clearer view of this matter, let it be observed, that after Moses had given a catalogue of the antediluvian patriarchs and their different ages, he then enters upon a new and important subject, viz. the great and universal corruption of mankind, and what was the chief and primary cause of it. But these corruptions must have taken place as far back as the days of Enoch, who being a righteous man and a prophet, foresaw the destruction coming upon mankind for their increa-

* Cockburn on the Deluge.

sing wickedness, as appears from the name which he gave his son *Methuselah*. The historian then acquaints us of the determination of the Almighty, who would not execute his vengeance at present, but add another period to the *days of man*, till the pious patriarchs should be gathered to their fathers, and those persons who were to renew the world, should not only be born, but be grown up to men. Afterwards another revelation is made that God would *destroy man from off the earth*. But in the midst of wrath he remembers mercy; for *Noah found favour in his sight*, and *he entered into a covenant with him*, to save his life, and make him the stock of future generations. Last of all he reveals to him his purpose of destroying the world by water, and gives him a command to build an ark, for saving himself, his family, and some of every species of living creatures upon earth.

The flood began in Noah's six hundredth year. Now if we count back one hundred and twenty years, it appears, that none of his sons were born till twenty years after that period. But when Noah received the command to build the ark, his sons and their wives are mentioned. It is scarcely probable, that the three young men were as yet marriageable, when human life was so remarkably long. But the expression might convey to Noah

an intimation to provide wives for his sons; who accordingly betrothed three young virgins to them, tho' their marriages were not consummated, till after their coming out of the ark: and a virgin betrothed was accounted from that time as a wife. How long their espousals might last at that period we cannot say. But it is highly probable, that the command was not given till Noah's sons were come to some age, so as to be able to assist at the work. Supposing then the ark twenty years in building, (which might be a sufficient time) when the work began, Japhet the eldest was ninety, Ham eighty-four, and Shem the youngest, seventy-seven years of age. Then, Noah would reap great assistance from his sons, and from their wives: for we find that long after the flood, women, however nobly born, were not brought up to an idle and indolent life, but to useful employments befitting their sex, either in the house, or in the field: and none would refuse to lend their helping hand to a work by which themselves were to be saved.

During this period, many of the pious patriarchs, such as Enoch, Methuselah, and Lamech, would endeavour both by precept and example to reclaim their profligate cotemporaries, and foreseeing the fatal effects of their growing vices, would warn them to flee from the wrath to

come;

come. Noah is expressly said to have been * *a preacher of righteousness*; yet from this we are not to infer, that he plainly acquainted the world of the ensuing deluge†, nor of the end and intention of the ark. We read of no such commission given to him, as was given to the prophets in after times, when they were sent to prophecy against cities and kingdoms. It seems impossible, had he published these ingrateful tidings, that he could have saved his life in the midst of such violence, without a continued train of miracles in his defence. Neither would this wicked race have allowed him to build and complete the ark, without attempting to pull it down and destroy it. Josephus says, that Noah being wearied with the wickedness of men, departed from them, and retired with his family into a remote place. If this was the case, Noah might build the ark without being obstructed by hardened and incorrigible sinners, whose doom was irreversibly fixed. Our Saviour compares the *days of the son of man*, to the destruction of Sodom in the time of Lot, of which the inhabitants were entirely ignorant; and likewise to the destruction of the old world, and says, † *They knew not, till the flood came and took them all away*. From this best authority, therefore, it appears,

* 2 Pet. ii. 5. † Cockburn on the Deluge. ‡ Matt. xxiv. 39.

that

that Noah did not openly proclaim to the world their fate, till it unexpectedly overtook them.

I am well aware, that many difficulties occur in the Mosaic history of the deluge, which cannot be removed without calling in the aid of omnipotent power. Therefore all I propose, is to lay before my readers, the most probable means employed by the Almighty on this awful and astonishing event; and to shew that the sacred historian mentions no facts which imply a contradiction; none, which are beyond the reach of the power of God; or which are incompatible with his character as the righteous and beneficent governor of the world.

Some are ready to ask, by what means could Noah collect all the different species of creatures, and then conduct them into the ark? But it is expressly said, * that *they came unto him*, and † *went into the ark*, i. e. voluntarily and of their own accord. Which plainly indicates a miraculous and supernatural power, exerted on this occasion. The Jews say, the whole was effected by the ministry of angels. But who can reason upon the way, in which an act of omnipotent power is brought about?

Others object and say, How could animals, (some of which have the slowest motion) come

* Gen. vi. 20.

† Ch. vii. 15.

from far distant regions to the ark of Noah, and return back from thence to their native climates? And how could the inhabitants of the chilling North, and those of the burning sands of Africa, be confined to the same temperature of air, for the space of twelve months, and yet all of them remain alive? These objections may in some measure be removed by the following considerations.

Tho' the allwise Creator, at first covered the earth in general with herbs and plants, or at least created their seeds, and communicated to the ground a prolific virtue to impregnate and bring them forth, yet it is highly probable, that of all creatures endowed with animal life, only one single male and female, were at first brought into being. Had more than one pair been created, they would have soon multiplied to such a degree, that the greater part of the earth, would have been rendered uninhabitable by man. History confirms this opinion, when it acquaints us, that several countries have been deserted by human inhabitants, owing to immense swarms of animals consuming the whole produce of the soil. Now as it seems to have been the intention of providence, that the earth should be gradually peopled with its various tribes, we naturally conclude that all animals were originally formed, in nearly one and
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the same place; which must have been in the land of Eden, because Adam first appeared, and afterwards took up his residence there. From that land there would be so many emigrations of men, and other living creatures, that the whole habitable earth might be sufficiently stocked with both, before the deluge. Yet the breed of the greatest part of animals would still remain in the same place which their first parents had occupied; and of these, abundance might be found, at no great distance from the ark, to serve as a nursery for a future world. If a whole species removed from that, to a very distant part of the earth, perhaps none of them were brought back to the ark, but, like those gigantic animals already mentioned, were totally destroyed at the flood, and left nothing behind them but their skeletons, to be memorials of their former existence.

It is said, many animals will only live in certain climates. But, from what I have already observed, this objection will not apply to those creatures which went into the ark, and which came from no great distance. It is well known, that man can live in all climates wherever he can find food, and be sheltered from the inclemency of the elements; and this may be the case with the greatest part of the animal creation. Vegetables, plants, and trees, require different soils, with dif-

ferent degrees of heat, of cold, and moisture, and therefore will not vegetate but in climates suited to their specific natures; for which reason the Creator in the beginning, furnished every part of the globe with such of these, as were fit and proper for it. But he created only one pair of living creatures, that, being *fruitful*, they might *multiply and replenish the earth*; for which reason he made them capable of changing their situation, and dispersing themselves over the habitable world. And tho' their constitutions cannot bear the violence of a sudden transition from one extreme to another, yet the power of custom and habit will gradually inure the greatest part of them to live in most climates under Heaven. Besides, the temperature of Eden being mild, and of a medium between the extremes of heat and cold, its inhabitants, upon being dispersed, would easily accommodate themselves to different degrees of each.

It has occasioned much speculation among learned and inquisitive men, how to account for that variety of living creatures, which is found in every kingdom and island of the world. And the greatest difficulty arises from this consideration, That many animals are now found in places, to which they could not have been transported by the hand of man; and others are so slow in their motions, that had they been travelling ever since
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the flood of Noah, they could not yet have arrived at many of those countries where they now exist, even supposing there had been no sea, or obstacle of any kind, to obstruct their journey.

I am not ashamed to own, that to unravel this difficulty is far above the reach of my capacity. I shall not therefore attempt to remove the veil, which the Almighty hath hitherto cast over that part of his providence, which he exerciseth over the animated world. Those who will not allow, that by a singular providence, some parts of the earth escaped from the effects of the general catastrophe under Noah, together with a remnant of creatures, to be the seed of after generations, but affirm, that from the ark, the whole earth was stored with life; and yet endeavour to assign natural causes for this wonderful phenomenon, are often obliged to encounter difficulties which they never can surmount. Others, to support this hypothesis, are under the necessity of multiplying miracles, which are neither suitable to the power and wisdom of God, nor congruous to the whole of his procedure, in every other part of his government. Doubtless, the easiest solution to the above mystery, is, the antient doctrine of spontaneous generation; which is now almost universally exploded among learned men: and how far any theory ought to be built upon it, is not
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my business to enquire. But if hitherto, no satisfactory account has been given, of the time when, or the manner how, the new world was peopled with inhabitants of the human race, no wonder we should be at a loss to know, how the whole world has been stored with all the different species of the animal kind.

After Noah had done all which *the Lord commanded him*, he then receives an order to enter into the ark. But there are several particulars relating to this order, mentioned by Moses, which are worthy of our notice.

We are told that Noah was then six hundred years old, and that he lived three hundred and fifty more; so that he was twenty years longer upon earth than his father Adam; and older than any of the patriarchs excepting two, Jared and Methuselah. His son Shem's age did not reach to within three hundred years of his father's. Some pretend to assign a natural cause for this disparity of years, namely, that Noah's constitution being hardened and confirmed before he went into the ark, enabled him to hold out against the effects of long confinement, unwholesome air, &c. whereas the constitutions of his children being young, raw, and tender, were more easily tainted and impaired. Noah, when he went into the ark,
took

took along with him * *his sons, his wife, and his son's wives*. From this it would appear that he had no more children alive. This circumstance does not bespeak the antediluvians to be so very prolific, as many are apt to imagine.

It appears from the history of Moses, that Noah had seven days warning given him, before the commencement of the deluge. † *For yet seven days, says the Almighty, I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights*, that is, at the end of seven days, such a thing would come to pass. All the special communications which the Creator held with man, in the first, and very often in the subsequent ages of the world, were probably on the sabbath day; and therefore the command to Noah to enter into the ark, was given on that day. His next sabbath he would keep in the ark, as a safe and sacred sanctuary to him, and all who belonged to him. But he would need a whole week to make necessary preparations for his future habitation. We may suppose that on the sabbath, when he received the divine oracle, all the animals were at hand, or at least drawing near to the ark; and as they went in pair by pair through one door, a single week would be little more than sufficient time for their entering in to it. And as they

* Gen. vii. 7-

† Ch. vii. 4.

approached they were not only to be taken in, but all to be disposed of in their places and stalls, and arranged no doubt according to the orders which Noah had received. This work would take up the most if not the whole of the week, during which, Noah and his family must have had abundance of employment. It would have been highly inconvenient therefore to have deferred entering into the ark with all the animals, till the day the flood came. It is indeed afterwards said, that they all did enter on that very day. But the meaning is only, that they had wholly entered on that day. The Hebrews abound with pleonasm, *i. e.* they often multiply words to express the self-same thing. And when they all entered, we are told, *the * Lord shut them in*: not only to secure them from the impending storm, but to prevent others from forcing their way into the ark, whether they might fly for shelter, when the rains began.

This event, according to the Hebrew computation, happened in the year of the world, *one thousand six hundred and fifty six.*

* Gen. vii. 16.

LECTURE XI.

GENESIS vii. ii.

In the second Month, the seventeenth Day of the Month, the same Day were all the Fountains of the great Deep broken up; and the Windows of Heaven were opened. And the Rain was upon the Earth forty Days and forty Nights.

THE history of Moses, is nothing but a history of that kingdom of providence, which Almighty God established over this world, and which he has all along conducted by such laws, as must appear to every attentive observer, the result of omnipotent power; joined with unerring wisdom, and unlimited goodness. We are entire strangers as to the manner in which these laws operate, and can only learn their effects from experience and observation. Yet these very effects we often substitute for primary causes, and call them the laws of nature: whereas in reality, they are nothing more than certain rules; which teach us, from the uniformity of providence, always to look for similar consequences, when the connections are of a

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similar

similar kind. We can not ascend to the first moving cause, neither are we able to trace many of the intermediate causes, between that and the last effect produced. Yet notwithstanding this, it becomes us to carry our researches into the great system of nature, as far as reason and experience can direct us; because every new discovery we make, gives us clearer and more exalted ideas, of the primary agent and great author of all. The various events of human life, are under the direction of infinite wisdom, yet prudence and interest make it necessary for us to learn the immediate cause of them. When we hear of a guilty land chastised by a ruinous and desolating war, shall we not enquire, who was the enemy, and by what means, he ensured his success? In like manner, when the sovereign Lord of the universe, makes a signal revolution in this globe which we inhabit, it is not only lawful, but reasonable for us, to trace as far as our limited capacities will permit, the means he employs on that occasion: tho' he seldom leaves himself *without a witness*, but either reveals these means, or enables us to investigate them by our own natural powers. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha; but it was by lightening setting on fire a bituminous soil. He cut off a whole generation, yet we are told, that it was by rain from the clouds, and *by the breaking up of the*
great

great deep. Hence we find the energy of omnipotent power, invariably exerting itself in a correspondence with certain causes and effects, several of which we are capable of investigating. By these means, we are convinced of a regular and established course of providence, and find it verified in experience, that the better we become acquainted with the phenomena of nature, the better we are enabled to discover those principles and causes, from which certain and determinate effects will always proceed. Therefore in our subsequent review of the deluge, we propose nothing more, than to point out those natural agents which, in the hand of the great Creator, were sufficient for producing such singular and extraordinary effects.

The period was now come, when the Almighty intended to give to the world, an awful exhibition of his power and justice, in depriving a wicked race of every favour which he had hitherto conferred upon them. But in the midst of deserved wrath, he extends his mercy and goodness to future generations, by entering into a gracious covenant with his servant Noah, and promising to save him and his family from the impending ruin. We have already heard, that the means which he made use of for this purpose, was ordering him to construct a vessel of such dimensions,

as might contain all the necessary seeds of future life.

Then we are told, *In the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of Heaven were opened.* Moses mentions the time when the flood commenced, that it might be known how long it continued upon the earth. There is no doubt but at this period, and for a long time after, days, months, and years, would be reckoned according to their natural succession, as they had ever been from the creation of the world.

Learned men differ about the season of the year when the flood began, owing to their difference of opinion about the time of the year, when the earth itself, and every thing in it was created. The greater part of writers are of opinion, that the creation took place about the autumnal equinox. * They think that this was the fittest season, because every thing would then be in full vigour and maturity, in that part of the world where Adam was formed. And as it is reasonable to believe, that neither man, nor beasts, nor birds, when newly created, would be left in a destitute condition, therefore they conclude, that grass, herbs, and fruits, would be created in such perfection as they are in

* Clayton's Vindic.

autumn, so as to afford proper food and nourishment for the whole. What they think, adds no small strength to this argument, is, that the Jews had two ways of reckoning the year; the one called civil, and the other ecclesiastical. The last, viz. the ecclesiastical year, was not instituted till after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and was dated from the vernal equinox. So, there was exactly six months between the commencement of these years. For we find the *feast of tabernacles*, when the fruits of the earth were gathered in, described in the * book of Exodus, as being held in the end of the year; but in † Leviticus it is commanded to be kept, on the *fifteenth day of the seventh month*. Therefore it appears, that before the giving of the law, the Israelites had always reckoned the beginning of their year from the autumnal equinox. This usage they could only learn from the tradition of Noah, as being the true antediluvian year, and this surely must have been dated from the time of the earth's formation. Thus the seventeenth day of the second month, when the flood began, might have been about the seventh of our November.

But the above opinion is controverted by other learned men, who adduce very strong arguments,

* Exod. xxiii. 16.

† Lev. xxiii. 34.

to prove that the earth was created in the spring, and about the time of the vernal equinox. They reason in the following manner, Doubtless, when Adam and other creatures were brought into being, there were fruits for them to eat; but it will not necessarily follow, that these fruits were autumnal. Some fruits are ripe in the spring, some in summer, and others in autumn: and it is probable that in Paradise, there were fruits in maturity every month of the year. An apostle alludes to this very circumstance, and introduces it as an emblem of the permanent blessings of the Gospel. He says, *the tree of life bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month.* They reason farther, that tho' the commencement of the antediluvian year in the spring was observed by all the patriarchs, yet it might be changed by their posterity, during their bondage in the land of Egypt; because they were obliged to conform to the customs and usages of their masters, who had changed the antient mode, and reckoned their year from the autumn, because at that time the fertility of their soil was greatly increased, by the overflowing of the River Nile. As to Moses permitting them to retain their former way of reckoning the year, in particular instances, sufficient reasons may be assigned. Thus, by the law, they were forbidden, either to sow or reap in the sab-

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batical or *seventh year*. Now had they computed the beginning of their year from the spring equinox, the prohibition would have reached to the eighth as well as the seventh year; for they sowed in September, and began their harvest in May following. But seed time and harvest are mentioned, as being both in one year. Again, in the year of jubilee, every man was to return to the possession, which he had sold or mortgaged. The most convenient season therefore, for him to enter upon his farm was at seed time in September, otherwise he would have lost one year's crop. Likewise, in all contracts for land and money, the properest time for payment was at the end of the year, when the whole produce of the earth was cut down and gathered in.

In the above instances, Moses allowed the Israelites to use their former way of calculating the year; but in all other matters and concerns, they were to be guided by the ecclesiastical year, which I have said, began at the vernal equinox, *i. e.* in the month of March. Tho' no reason is assigned for this change of their year, but that the first day of it might serve as a memorial of the day of their departure out of Egypt, yet it might be the design of providence to bring back the Israelites to the true and antient computation; and at the same time make them forget many of the
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idolatrous rites and customs of the people among whom they had formerly lived. Another argument to prove the season of the year, when the world was created, may be drawn from the custom of those countries, who were first peopled after the flood, and among whom early tradition would be better preserved. Now, the countries which lie nearest to the plains of Shinar, where the first dispersion of mankind began, such as Chaldea, Persia, China, &c. and indeed almost all Asia, begin their year from the vernal equinox. Hence according to this opinion, the flood began about the sixth of May, or as some maintain, (who think that at this period the equinox was placed farther back) about the end of April. The supporters of the above hypothesis reason also from the fitness of the season. They say, that the world being destroyed by the deluge, it is more credible that the animals would be sent forth to renew it, at that time when all nature begins to revive, and to forward generation of every kind, which surely is the spring. Whereas, had the deluge ended in autumn, this could not have been the case; neither could the animals at that season have found sufficient food; and their constitutions being rendered tender by their long confinement, would not be well calculated to bear the rigours of the ensuing winter. I shall conclude this part of the
subject

subject with the remark of a great naturalist*:
 ‘ Among all the remains of the antediluvian
 ‘ world, I have found such an uniformity, and
 ‘ general consent, that I was able to discover, what
 ‘ time of the year it was, that the deluge began.
 ‘ The whole tenor of these bodies thus preserved,
 ‘ clearly pointing forth the month of May. Nor
 ‘ have I ever met with so much, as one single
 ‘ plant or body, among all those vast multitudes,
 ‘ which I have carefully viewed, that is peculiar
 ‘ to any other season of the year; or any thing
 ‘ that falls out earlier or later; or any of them
 ‘ short, or further advanced in growth, feed, or
 ‘ the like, than they now usually are in that
 ‘ month.’

The sacred historian informs us, that when the Almighty had resolved to punish the inhabitants of the old world for their enormous sins, he pronounced this sentence against them, † *Behold I will destroy them with the earth.* ‡ One of the most eminent divines of this age, says, the words should be rendered thus, *Behold I will destroy them, and the earth with them.* The word *earth* in this place, and in the two following chapters, never means the whole of the terraqueous globe, but only the habitable earth, or what we commonly

* Dr. Woodward.
 Professor at Gottingen.

† Gen. vi. 13.

‡ Michaelis;

term continents. Now we are told, that these continents were actually destroyed, and the divine sentence was carried into execution. Moses indeed, gives us no philosophical account of this catastrophe. He only declares what he was authorised to say upon the subject, viz. that *the windows of Heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, and that the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.* Noah himself could not know, that both these means were employed to destroy the earth. He might hear the cataracts of rain, but being close shut up within the ark, he had no opportunity of judging what might happen to the fountains of the deep: Therefore God must have revealed the causes of the deluge either to Moses, or to Noah, (after the flood) from whom the tradition might be handed down by the patriarchs.

When we view those rocks and mountains; those subterraneous caves and singular appearances, which diversify the face of our globe; and when we examine those compositions of heterogeneous particles promiscuously blended together; we must believe, that all these are not the result of regular and uniform laws, but have been occasioned by some tremendous convulsion, which threw the different parts of the mass into such disorder and confusion. This globe also exhibits to
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the view of every attentive observer a singular and extraordinary phenomenon, which affords as great a degree of conviction to our senses, that the whole of what is at present dry land, has once been the bed of the ocean, as the footsteps of a man upon soft sand, prove that a human being has been walking there. Let us only descend into a mine, or cast our eye upon part of a mountain, where the soil has been washed away by floods or rains, and we shall plainly observe different strata or layers, consisting of different materials, generally lying in a horizontal position, but often a little inclined. Many of those strata are hard and petrified, yet their component parts might at first have been soft and friable. Now, we cannot suppose, that these are the effects of mere chance, whose productions are never marked with such uniformity. Therefore they must have been accumulations or deposits of different particles in the bottom of the sea, formed by the motion and currents of its waters.

But we have an ocular demonstration of this truth, from those sea shells, which are found in such quantities on the tops, and in the bodies of mountains, which are incrustured in the hardest rocks, in all parts of the globe, even at the greatest distance from the ocean. Yea in plains and level countries, when we dig to any depth below the

surface, we meet with whole beds of these shells and other marine substances. And it is evident that the fishes, which were covered with these shells have generated, lived, and died in the same place, for we find them of all ages and sizes, from the small germ to the full grown oyster. Thus the records of nature bear ample testimony to the truth of this part of sacred history, and prove that the habitable earth has once been destroyed, and that our continents and islands owe their origin to *the fountains of the great deep*.

We find a tradition from time immemorial, handed down among different nations, who have lived in remote and far distant regions from one another, of the whole earth being once laid under water. Those who have enjoyed the benefit of revelation, found their belief of this memorable event upon sacred history: and tho' profane historians have often blended their reports of the deluge with their own fictions and fables, yet in the main they coincide with Moses; which, not only proves his history to be true, but likewise shews us, that all the accounts of this grand revolution, originally proceeded from one source, and were disseminated over the world, by the dispersion of the sons of Noah.

Before I attempt to explain the natural causes, which, the Almighty, agreeable to the laws of his
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providence, employed on this awful occasion, it may not be amiss to lay before my readers, the opinions of learned men, upon a subject which has been warmly agitated among them; namely, Whether the flood of Noah was partial, or whether it was universal? The commonly received opinion has been the last, viz. that the flood was universal, and that every living creature upon earth was then destroyed, excepting those which were contained in Noah's ark. And the following reasons are made use of to confirm this opinion.

1. God gives an express command to Noah, to take into the ark, of all living things, two of every sort, in order to preserve their species. And Moses afterwards declares, * *That there entered into the ark, every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, and every bird of every sort, and they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two; of all flesh, wherein there is the breath of life.* Now, these expressions plainly imply, that all other living creatures were to be destroyed; otherwise Noah might have recruited himself much easier out of some other country, where the deluge did not reach, and consequently where the creatures

* Gen. vii. 14.

were not destroyed. Besides if a man had the strongest inclination to assure his reader, that all creatures in all places were destroyed, he could not express himself in clearer and more explicit terms.

2. The scriptures farther say, * that *fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail*; and that *all the high hills under the whole Heaven were covered*; and *all flesh died that moveth upon the earth*.

† Therefore unless this devastation was general, we can hardly conceive what necessity there was for any ark at all. Noah and his family might have retired into some neighbouring country, as Lot and his family saved themselves by withdrawing from Sodom, when that city was to be destroyed. This had been a much better expedient, and might have been done with more ease, than the great preparations he was ordered to make, of a large vessel, with stalls and apartments, for the reception of beasts and birds.

3. If the waters of the flood prevailed so much in one part of the earth, as to be fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains, it is impossible, if not prevented by a miracle, but they would spread themselves around the whole globe. The law of gravity must have produced this effect;

* Gen- vii. 19, &c.

† Burnet's Theory.

for water if not retarded, will never remain higher in one place than another, but where there is a declivity, it will flow with a rapid motion, and never rest, till it bring itself to an equilibrium. Thus, philosophy unites with revelation, to prove the universality of the deluge.

4. If we make an estimate from the longevity of mankind, their numbers before the flood must have been superior to what they are at present, or what perhaps the present world is capable of containing; therefore as the whole world would be fully peopled at this period, the flood must have been universal otherwise the sentence of the Almighty could not have been carried into execution.

5. The earth itself seems to offer a demonstrative argument; of the universality of the deluge; from the vast number of shells and teeth of fishes; from the bones of various animals; from entire and partial vegetables; and other strange things, which are to be found on the tops of the highest mountains, and in the bowels of the earth, at a great distance from the sea; and which were probably deposited there at the deluge.

6. The general consent of Jews and Christians, joined with the testimonies of many heathen writers, in a great measure confirm the veracity of Moses's account of the deluge, and prove it to be uni-

universal; in so far, that *all creatures on dry land, in whose nostrils was the breath of life, died.*

But there are other * men of great eminence in the republic of letters, who have taken a different side of the question, and have raised many objections to the above hypothesis, which cannot easily be resolved. I shall now with equal impartiality submit to the judgment of the reader, such of these objections as appear to me the most plausible.

1. Those, who allow the flood to be universal; but cannot accede to that opinion which makes it to have covered the whole earth, and destroyed living creatures of every kind, begin; with proving, that many expressions to be found in the sacred writings, ought not to be understood in a literal and limited sense, but are to be explained; so as to be consistent with reason, and the scope and intention of the writer. Were not this the case, the most absurd doctrines (as too often happens) might receive an apparent sanction from scripture language. Thus, the word *all*, is of doubtful signification, and ought not to be taken absolutely, but where it is restrained to this sense by the subject in hand. Moses speaks of † *a famine over all the face of the earth*. Yet it is always

* Vossius, Le Clerc, Stillingfleet, Clayton, &c. † Gen. xii. 56.

understood that this famine prevailed only over one part of the earth. The king of Egypt is compared by one prophet to a tree, and it is said of him, * *All the fowls of the Heaven made their nests in his boughs ; and under his branches, did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young ; and under his shadow dwell all nations.* Another prophet speaking of the captivity of his countrymen, says, † *All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword.* Now it is evident, that the word *all* in both these passages means nothing more than *many*. It is needless to multiply quotations to prove, that the words, *every, all, whole*, in a variety of places, both in the Old and New Testament, are only expressive of a *great part*, or a *large number*.

As to the height of the waters of the flood above the earth, Moses does not say, that they were fifteen cubits higher than the mountains, but only that *they prevailed fifteen cubits upwards ; and the tops of the mountains were covered.* They who think, that these cubits point only, at the highest parts of the earth inhabited by men, affirm, that such a flood must have destroyed the whole of the human race ; since no person could stir from the place of his abode, for the space of forty days, while dreadful torrents of rain poured down from

* Ezek. xxxi. 6.

† Amos ix. 10.

the Heavens, and swept away bodies heavier than those of men, into the bosom of the deep. In the most remarkable occurrences mentioned in sacred writing, mountains are always introduced as objects of great moment. Therefore some are of opinion, that Moses here introduces *hills* and *mountains*, to add dignity and magnificence to his subject. When one of the prophets commemorates the miraculous providence of God, in conducting the Israelites to Canaan, he says, * *The everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow*. Farther, to *cover* any thing, does not always mean to surmount or overtop it, but frequently to surround it, or be about it in great plenty and abundance. Moses says, † *At even, the quails came up and covered the camp*. But he explains this afterwards, when he tells us, ‡ *That they fell as a day's journey on this side, and on that side, round about the camp*. It is generally agreed, that the principal intention of Moses in writing the history of Genesis, was to trace the genealogy of his ancestors, and to relate the most memorable transactions of their lives. Now upon the supposition, that the flood prevailed fifteen cubits above the tops of the highest mountains, in the country where Noah resided, yet in other parts of the

* Habbak. iii. 6. † Exod. xvi. 13. ‡ Numb. xi. 3.

globe, it would not have reached, by upwards of a thousand cubits, the tops of some mountains, such as the Andes and the Alps.

2. As Noah was only the ninth from Adam, and as it does not appear from their history, that the first generations of mankind were more prolific than the present, it is not probable the whole earth was fully peopled before the flood, especially when we find it capable of containing far more inhabitants at this time than it does, altho' the period which has elapsed since the flood is greater than the period between that event and the creation. Supposing then all the continent of Asia, or even the whole of the anciently known world, had been drowned with water, and the whole of the human race (excepting Noah and his family) cut off, yet that is no reason, why the opposite part of the globe, viz. America, which we suppose to be unpeopled, should be destroyed with every living creature in it. It was sufficient, that the punishment should extend as far as the guilt: and, tho' man had sinned in one hemisphere, why should all animals, for his sake, be exterminated in another?

That the brute creation before the deluge, had extended over more of the earth, than the rational, appears from the language of sacred writing. In the production of beasts, God said, * *Let*

* Gen. i. 25.

the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, and beast of the earth after his kind : and it was so. But in the formation of man, he said, * *Let us make man in our own image, and after our likeness.* In the former instance, God gave a prolific power to the earth; and the seminal principles of all animals, were contained in the matter from which they were formed. But it was otherwise with man. He was made of the *dust of the earth*, by a peculiar energy of the Creator; and tho' at first he made no more than a male and female of the human species, yet we have no reason to think, that this was not the case with other creatures; for we are informed, that *the waters* brought forth abundantly, and why might not the dry land do the same? Hence, it is natural to conclude, that all parts of the earth, which were divided from each other by impassable seas or otherwise, did by the virtue of creative power, produce such animals of every kind, as were suited to their respective climates. Thus, tho' the flood destroyed all mankind, and every living thing where men had their residence, yet its destructive effects, might not extend to those parts, and the animals therein, which mankind never had inhabited. Upon this hypothesis, there is no

* Gen. i. 26.

occasion, for multiplying so many unnecessary miracles about the flood, as some are apt to do; and all those difficulties concerning the migration of animals to different parts of the earth, do of themselves vanish and fall to the ground.

3. From every observation, made by the most ingenious and inquisitive part of mankind, it plainly appears, that there is not a sufficient quantity of water, belonging to the terraqueous globe, to make a universal deluge, such as is commonly believed to have taken place. Therefore, in order to solve this difficulty, some bring water from different planets; and others make the Almighty work miracles, which are incompatible with every other part of his administration. The water within the bowels of the earth, bears no proportion to what is on its surface, and the whole when united, could never ascend above the tops of the highest mountains, without inverting the great laws of nature. Nay, if we suppose the whole atmosphere had been converted into water, it is proved by experiments, that it could not exceed a column of this element, two and thirty feet high. Besides, to effect this change, the air must have been condensed eight hundred times more, than what it is in its present state.

4. Moses says, * *God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged.* It is well known that wind raises great exhalations from the waters by exposing more of their surface to the action of the air. But how many years would elapse, before evaporation could make the waters which covered the whole earth, subside from the tops of the highest mountains to their bottom? Which proves that the flood had neither been so high, nor so universal as some imagine.

5. If the sea waters had been spread over the face of the whole dry land for almost a year, many species of trees, herbs, and plants, would have been totally destroyed: for it is well known that sea water is fatal to many of them.

6. The description of Noah's ark, proves that it could not contain a pair of all creatures upon earth, and as much food as was necessary to support them for one year. Besides, it is natural to suppose, that the greatest part of them would generate in the ark; by which means, their numbers would be increased, and a greater quantity of food become necessary. But had they been all there, how could several of them have reached America, and many remote regions, separated from one another by seas, lakes, rivers,

* Gen. viii. 1.

mountains, and woods. Yea, had none of these intervened, there is one animal called the Sloth, which would have required twenty thousand years to accomplish such a journey.

Thus I have laid before my readers, what appears to me the best arguments, both, for and against the universality of the deluge. I shall only make this remark upon the whole: They, who believe the deluge to have been universal, insomuch that all living creatures were destroyed by it, are countenanced by scripture, and the obvious meaning of the historian's words. On the other hand, they who think that it was only partial, tho' it destroyed the human race, and all other creatures in the countries which they inhabited; raise objections to the above hypothesis, which their opponents can never remove. Yet the last, profess their faith in revelation, equally with the former; they only differ about the meaning of its language.

There is nothing, which, to a rational believer in revelation, affords a stronger proof of its veracity, than to find every thing which it relates concerning this globe, and the different changes it has undergone, confirmed by the different phenomena which appear upon it. And as the greatest change which ever this earth sustained since the time of its formation, happened in the days of Noah;

Noah, therefore men of great learning and of inquisitive minds, have been at the utmost pains, to reconcile Moses's account of the deluge with the present state of nature; and to investigate such causes, or rather means, which the Almighty employed to bring about this revolution, as are agreeable to those laws or rules of providence, by which, he has all along conducted both his natural and moral government of the world.

I shall not attempt to entertain my readers with the different theories of the deluge, which have been given by men of eminence, both in foreign countries, and in our own; because the limited bounds of my work will not permit me to point out their different fallacies. And I do not think it justifiable in any writer, to lay unwarrantable opinions before mankind in general, without affording them the means of detecting their errors. Those who have time and talents to bestow upon inquiries of this nature, cannot be at a loss to find many productions suitable to their taste*.

What I now propose, is to illustrate the words of Moses, and to shew, that his account of the deluge, is in no ways repugnant to the soundest

* The most distinguished theorists of this country, are, Burnet, Woodward, Whiston, and Whitehurst. Among foreigners, Leibnitz, Buffon, Le Cat, Lazara Moro, and Mons. de Luc, who in my opinion, is the most ingenious and consistent writer of the whole.

principles of natural philosophy, but on the contrary, that it is consonant to every appearance which this globe presents us with, and might have been brought about by the operation of the laws of nature, as they were then directed by their great and all-powerful author. But I would premise; that none of these causes, which at present act upon and influence our globe, could have produced such a change as happened at the deluge, and whoever has yet attempted to account for this event, by the agency of mechanical powers; has never been able to remove some objections; and which indeed on this hypothesis are insurmountable. Therefore we are obliged to call in the almighty power of God, exerting itself upon an occasion worthy of himself to interfere in, when modeling anew the workmanship of his own hands. And we may hold it is a maxim, that in every effect produced, where the powers of nature stop, the divine power immediately acts.

We have heard, that *on the seventeenth day of the second month, the windows of Heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up.* The word *windows* is in the original, fissures, clefts, or as some have rendered it cataracts. This shews us, that the rain did not fall from the clouds, like ordinary showers which descend in drops, but in floods, like those water spouts, which

in many parts of the earth, but especially in the Indies, produce such terrible effects. This extraordinary and violent rain we are told, continued for forty days, without any interruption; after which period, it might fall in a moderate manner, so as to keep the flood at its height: for we are afterwards informed, * *That the waters prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.*

And *the fountains of the great deep were broken up.* The great deep, is an expression frequently used by the sacred writers, to describe the sea, which is so called, on account of the great quantity and depth of waters contained within it. By *the fountains of the great deep*, some understand all the subterraneous waters, which either reside or circulate within the bowels of the earth. Doubtless there is a vast quantity of such water within the globe. Even in this kingdom, there are to be met with running rivers and lakes of water, at a great depth below the surface of the ground †; tho' these are only small, when compared with others, mentioned by historians in different parts of the earth. But were all the subterraneous water, which is dispersed throughout the whole globe, brought upon its superficies, and carried into the mighty ocean, it is highly improbable,

* Gen. vii. 24.

† In the mountains of Derbyshire.

that it would raise it one foot above its ordinary level. Others by the great deep, understand an immense quantity of water, which they suppose collected together around the center of the earth, and which in different parts communicates with the sea, and some springs of water. But this hypothesis of a vast abyfs in the bowels or near the center of the earth, is fully and clearly confuted by modern experiments; from which it appears that the globe of the earth, weighs as much, or is as dense, as two and half globes of the same dimensions, supposing they consisted of nothing but Portland stone; which is an evident proof that the earth increases in density from the surface to the center; whereas the reverse would be true, were any large portion of it nothing but water. Therefore men of great ingenuity and learning, have seen the necessity of calling in another and more powerful agent than water to cause the deluge, and produce many appearances in nature. I mean that of fire.

When we extend our view along the surface of the earth, we observe that in most countries, it abounds with hills and mountains of different heights and magnitudes. We can never believe, that these towering masses were formed by the sea or water of any kind, because, since the commencement of the oldest history or tradition to be

met with, there is not an instance of any one mountain formed by that element. But when we examine the materials of which these mountains consist, we find some of them composed of different layers of a solid and compacted substance, which indicate its parts to have been once in a state of fusion. This substance we find to be of the same nature and quality, with that which is ejected from the tops of burning mountains, such as Etna and Vesuvius, and is called lava. The lava when first vomited forth from the mouths of volcanos, has the appearance of melted metal, and runs in a continued stream, or spreads itself upon the ground, till it becomes solid and indurated by cold. And various coverings of this liquefied matter, being successively piled above one another, * sometimes form a large mountain. But this burning torrent when it meets with water is soon arrested, and immediately consolidates; by which a perpendicular wall is formed†. New streams of lava accumulating, not only reach

* All the mountains and hills about Naples, and over the greatest part of Italy, the islands of Lipari, Strombolo, and Lipari, with the Archipelago, upon examination are found to be nothing, but huge heaps of matter vomited out by volcanos; which induce many learned men to believe, that all the mountains upon earth have been raised by subterraneous fires.

See Sir Wm. Hamilton's ingenious observations on volcanos.

† Buffon's Nat. Hist. Vol. 9.

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the top of this wall, but run over the face of it, The moment the particles of these fall to the ground, they become solid, and by the sudden action of the salt water upon them they are formed with different, but regular sides. The bundles of the lava do not fall in a regular continued stream, nor in equal masses. Hence, if there are intervals in the fall of the matter, the superior surface of the column, being consolidated, is hollowed by the weight of the succeeding mass, which then moulds itself into a convex form, in the concavity of the first. This is the cause of those transverse joints or articulations, which appear in the greater part of these prismatic columns. But when the lava falls in an uninterrupted stream, then the column is one continued mass without any articulation. This kind of matter is commonly termed *basaltes**.

A celebrated chemist† remarks, ‘that an accurate distinction has not yet been made, betwixt the phenomena of fire actually existing, as a principle in the composition of bodies, and those which it exhibits, when existing separately in its natural state.’ Therefore, neither the time, the place, nor the mode, in which subterraneous fire was generated, can be truly ascertained. I ven-

* The Giant’s Causeway in Ireland, and the whole island of Staffa, one of the Western isles of Scotland, are all formed of *basaltes*.

† Macquer’s Chem.

tured a conjecture in a * former discourse, that this fire was the principal mean employed by the Creator, when he inflicted *a curse on the ground* for man's disobedience. And to me it appears highly probable, that as the wickedness of the antediluvians was still increasing, the effects of this curse were sensibly felt from the time of its publication, to the flood, and perhaps for some time after. During all this period, the uncontrollable agent, would be active in the bowels of the earth, frequently breaking forth in tremendous earthquakes and volcanos. The book of Job, and some other of the sacred writings, describe storms and tempests in such strong terms, that it appears the accounts of some awful events before the deluge, had been handed down to them from early tradition, as we are informed of nothing similar since that period.

That this globe has suffered some dreadful convulsion, is evident to every inquisitive observer. Our mountains consist of different materials, and we often find the wrecks of the ocean, both on their surface and within their bowels: therefore they may be considered as partly formed by water, and partly by subterraneous fire. There is no doubt but the motion of the tides, and currents

* Lect. 6. page 172.

in the bottom of the sea, will produce great inequalities, and in some places collect more accumulations of different substances, than in others. Therefore, those mountains in which no marine exuviae are found, are probably the oldest, and nearly coeval with the first of the human race, and may therefore be called primordial. For if we believe, according to Moses, that there were no fishes in the sea, till the fifth day of the creation, it would be a considerable time, before they could cover its bottom to such a degree, as to make a part of every elevation raised upon it. But we shall shew that many of the inequalities on the face of our earth, are owing to another and more powerful element.

It is well known, that many fossils and minerals ferment by moisture, and at last generate fire, which gradually increases to greater degrees of violence. Now, the waters of the sea filtrating through chinks and fissures, made by the first convulsion which this globe underwent, might descend a great depth into the bowels of the earth, and meeting with different kinds of substances, capable of fermentation, actual fire would thus be excited, and would of course produce a vast quantity of elastic steams. The force with which these are capable of acting, can be ascertained by no rule whatever; yea it exceeds all belief; and there
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are many * fatal instances of the powerful and extensive effects of elastic steams arising from melted matter, especially when it meets with water. The irresistible force of the igneous steams, would soon form cavities containing burning and liquid matter. But when there happened to be any fissures leading to other adjoining cavities, or when there were less solid partitions between them; the steams would force their way in that direction, and produce earthquakes and subterraneous convulsions. Other parts of the globe, which were on a level with these burning caverns; and which lay betwixt them and the center; being less compressible, could not be removed, therefore that part of the mass, which lay betwixt these cavities, and the bottom of the sea, must of necessity yield to the irresistible agent. Upon which, huge masses of matter with their deposits and accumulations, would be raised up, and form the basis of new mountains. But the interior fire below these

* About sixty years ago, a melancholy accident happened from the casting of brass cannon, at Windmill, Moorfields, where a number of spectators were assembled, to see the metal run into the moulds. The heat of the metal of the first gun, drove so much damp into the mould of the second, which was near it, that as soon as the metal was let into it, it blew up with the greatest violence, tearing up the ground some feet, breaking down the furnace, untiling the house, and killing many people on the spot with the steams of melted matter.

Whitehurst's Inquiry, page 95.

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elevated masses, not being quite extinguished; would at different times act with repeated violence, and pursue the same direction; by which means, new elevations of the same mountains would take place. There are similar instances in modern times*, of islands rising out of the bottom of the sea, and after an interval of several years, increasing in magnitude and height†. At length numbers of these elevations, would rise above the level of the sea, having the appearance of small islands of a conical form. Some of them might be raised to a great height, such as the Cordeleras, Teneriff, and the Alps. These new islands, consisting of calcined matter and marine substances, and being exposed to the influence of the sun, would be remarkably fit for vegetation. Therefore as soon as any vegetable soil was accumulated upon them, seeds of every kind, whether transported to them by the wind, or by birds, or brought by the tides from the shores of neighbouring continents, would soon take root, and produce the most luxuriant crops. And different kinds of animals, might reach them from the nearest continents by various ways and means.

Moses tells us, that all fishes were created in the sea, from whence we conclude, that at first it was

* See note, page 340. † See Mr. de Luc. Vol. 6.

an element suited to the whole species. But when the above mountains were elevated above the water, they would carry along with them many productions of the sea, and among other things; in their hollows, which would continue to be filled with water, fishes of various kinds. This accounts for fishes being found in inaccessible lakes on the very tops of high mountains.

While the subterraneous fire was operating in different parts of the globe, the continents being ponderous, and raised above the level of the sea; would more forcibly resist their influence, than a covering of a liquid and much lighter element; therefore the fire situated under these continents, not being able to ascend so as to burst the surface of the earth, would take a lateral direction, and by that means form long galleries full of nothing but steam and melted matter. The length of these canals of liquid fire, may be judged of, from the account of an earthquake *, still fresh in the minds of many, which was heard and felt over the extent of a country, not less than three thousand miles: Thus the habitable earth, being gradually undermined, stood upon fire, like a vast arch, supported by pillars. At last, the fatal period being come, when the Almighty had decreed to *destroy*

* This was the earthquake so fatal to Lisbon, which happened on the 1st of November, 1755:

the earth with mankind, he commissioned another agent, viz. water, to assist in completing the general catastrophe. I shall not pretend to unfold all the causes, which the Creator employed on this occasion, to accomplish his purpose, nor the manner in which he directed them to act. But so far the sacred historian informs us, *that the windows of Heaven were opened, and it rained forty days and forty nights upon the earth*. There might have been previous to this, a long and severe drought. The subterraneous fires, would also raise a vast quantity of vapours, so that the whole of the atmosphere would be saturated with water. The Almighty on this occasion, might, by some secret and unknown law, cause the electric fluid to descend from the clouds in greater quantities than had ever happened before. The effects which this would produce may be learned from a common phenomenon. In a thunder storm, when a large portion of lightening bursts out from the clouds, what violent showers of rain do sometimes ensue? And perhaps an immediate act of omnipotent power changed at this time the direction of the earth's axis.

Moses tells us, that *the windows of Heaven were not only opened, but the fountains of the great deep were broken up*. This phrase appears to me truly sublime and characteristic of the awful event.

When some of the weakest parts of the then earth, which had hitherto served as a partition betwixt the fiery vaults, and the adjoining ocean, were broken asunder, by the expansive force of the imprisoned steams, the water would rush into these deep fountains of fire. Then the conflict between the contending elements would be dreadful past imagination. The borders of the antient continent, or continents, would be instantly blown up, like a house, when a magazine of powder is set on fire in some of its lowest vaults. But the water incessantly pouring in among these fiery galleries, would occasion such a fermentation that many of the former partitions, would be deranged and broken asunder. The sea at the same time being rarefied by fiery steams, would be elevated, and overflow the dry land. Till at last, the immense quantity of water from the clouds, together with a large portion of the waters of the sea, would make the * incumbent pressure and weight upon

* The weight and pressure of water, produced a very singular phenomenon, not many years ago, in the county of Cumberland. There was a marsh upon the estate of Sir Ja. Graham, of Netherby, called the Solway Moss, consisting of 1,600 acres, of soft slimy mud. Its surface was so thin that in the height of summer, the sportsmen could hardly venture to cross it. In the year 1771, after three days rain of unusual violence, which extended in a line as far as Newcastle, and carried away a bridge built there over the River Tyne, the above marsh was in some parts entirely covered with
water,

the former dry land, so very great, that, in the words of scripture, *the pillars of the earth would tremble*, and what remained of them would at last be broken down and crushed in pieces. Then the ancient sea would gradually leave its former bed, and occupy a new and lower one, prepared for its

water, but the greatest part of its surface was buoyed up several feet above its former level. One end of the marsh was bounded by a dry and firm moss, in the middle of which there was a very small stream of running water. This moss was elevated several yards above a meadow of rich soil, which adjoined to the River Esk. Late in the night upon the 17th of November the moss was burst asunder, by the weight of the water, and a farmer who lived on the meadow was awakened with an unusual noise, like the distant sound of a stormy ocean. When he went out with a lanthorn, to enquire into the matter, he perceived a black deluge rolling forward to his house, upon which he alarmed his neighbours, who spent a horrible night, while the pitchy cataract overturned some of their houses, and filled the rest to the top. Next morning they were taken out through the roofs of the remaining houses, and tho' some cattle were suffocated, no human lives were lost. The eruption burst from the place of its discharge like a stream of thick ink, and then expanded itself over the whole valley to the depth of fifteen or eighteen feet in many places, carrying along with it huge heaps of peat and turf. Afterwards this new deposit began to consolidate, and put on the appearance of a black moss. The meadow covered with moss consisted of near 500 acres of fine arable soil, and the proprietor, has at a great expence, restored the whole to its primitive state, excepting about 60 acres. The mode which he pursued to accomplish this desirable change, was by first loosening the moss, and then hushing it away with water into the river.

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reception: and it might prevail fifteen cubits above the highest parts of the old world.

Here I am forced to pause a little, and deplore the situation of the good patriarch, with his family in the ark. What dread and terror must have seized his soul, when for many days, he heard the loudest peals of thunder rolling above his head, and heard the groans and agonies of nature, ascending from the bottom of the deep, and mingling with the noise of warring elements! What load of grief and sorrow would hang upon his mind, when he reflected on the loss of his kindred and relations, with every other creature upon earth, all of whom were now entombed in one common grave! And, had not his faith supported him, how often must he have thought his life in imminent danger, when the surges, like moving mountains were sometimes raising his ark to the Heavens, and at other times threatening to plunge it beneath the waters of the deep!

The grand revolution, which sunk the antient continents, and drew off the sea from those which we inhabit, tho' it was violent, yet it was not rapid or sudden. Had it been rapid, and the declivity betwixt the old and the new sea exceeding great, the strong currents of the waters, would have carried along with them, not only the whole of the living creatures, but likewise deposits of
every

every kind which were not solid and ponderous. Whereas we find in our mountains and plains, sand, gravel, &c. and vast heaps of the shells of marine fishes, which evidently occupy their antient and native beds. Neither could the great change be very slow and progressive; for by such a gentle retreat, all the creatures which had ever lived in the sea, would have had an opportunity of continuing in it. But we find, not only on the coasts, but in different parts of this island, marine bodies, which are in none of the neighbouring seas, nor indeed in any sea whatever, which renders it probable, that their species is extinguished; for did they exist, it is not likely, that they would have hitherto escaped the notice of man. There must therefore have been a cause, which made the sea retreat from our continents, in such a manner, as to have destroyed several of its former inhabitants, or have concealed them afterwards from human observation.

Moses informs us, * that *God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged*. As the atmosphere was now drained of its watery particles, there would be an extraordinary ascent of vapours, occasioned by the wind; of course the waters on the face of the earth would gradually

* Gen. xiii. 1, &c.

subside. At the same time, the subterraneous fires being almost spent, and the fermentations ceasing, the waters of the sea after being rarefied by heat, would now be condensed, and occupy less space than formerly. Then, the tops of the mountains which had been raised in the antient sea, would be greatly elevated above their bases, and all those parts of the old ocean, where the bottom had been level, would be converted into so many plains.

We are told, that *the ark rested, in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat*. It is generally believed, that when this event happened, the flood was very much abated: but, that this was not the case, appears from the words of Moses. He declares, * that *the waters prevailed on the earth, one hundred and fifty days*, i. e. the flood was so long at its height. But, as the deluge began on the seventeenth day of the second month, and the ark rested on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, this makes an interval of exactly one hundred and fifty days. Therefore the ark must have rested upon Ararat, before the waters upon the earth had in the least subsided, but, had they been fifteen cubits above the top of that mountain, its bottom could not have touched the ground. This

* Gen. vii. 24.

proves that Ararat, and numberless mountains beside, had been raised in the sea before the deluge.

There are various opinions about these mountains of Ararat. Some think they lie in Armenia. Others suppose them to be the Gordiæan mountains which lie on the North of Assyria. A learned father of the church*, who was far from being an incompetent judge, informs us, that ‘ Ararat
‘ is a champaign country, incredibly fertile, thro’
‘ which flows the river Araxes at the foot of
‘ Mount Taurus, which extends itself to that plain.
‘ Wherefore by the mountains of Ararat, on
‘ which the ark rested, are not to be understood
‘ the mountains of Armenia, but the highest
‘ mountains of Taurus, that overlook the plains
‘ of Ararat.’

The historian then acquaints us, that *the waters decreased continually until the tenth month, and on the first day of that month, were the tops of the mountains seen.* By the *tops of the mountains*, in scripture style, is not always meant the very summits, but their inferior parts also. Thus, the prophet foretelling a great scarcity of food for cattle and flocks, says, † *The top of Carmel shall wither.* But the lower parts of hills generally yield the best pasture. It is said of Moses ‡, *he went up to the top*

* St. Jerom.

Amos i. 2.

Exod. xix. 20.

of Mount Sinai. This could not mean the most elevated part of it, because the presence of God appeared there like *devouring fire*. And Josephus says, the top of that mountain is inaccessible on account of craggy rocks. Therefore Moses probably went up only to the foot of these rocks. By the tops of the mountains being seen, may be either understood, that the higher grounds in the country adjoining to Ararat began now to rise above the waters; or that the air was cleared of vapours, in so much, that Noah could discern the tops of the neighbouring mountains. It is probable, that the antediluvians, like the inhabitants of Sodom, were surrounded with darkness as soon as the flood began, so, that for many days, the light of the sun could not penetrate the gross atmosphere, but all was one dismal night. The words of the covenant afterwards made with Noah indicate so much, when a promise was made, that not only * *seed time and harvest, summer and winter*, but even *day and night should never cease again*.

And it came to pass at the end of forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark, which he had made; and he sent forth a raven. He made choice of this bird, to make a trial of the state of the earth, because it was of a strong flight, and was

* Gen. viii. 22.

most likely to pick up food from the wrecks of the deluge. *But the raven went to and fro, until the waters were dried off the earth.* It hovered frequently around the ark, where it had been confined so long, and where it had left its mate behind. But according to some versions, it never returned more; which gave rise to the proverb, *the crow for a messenger.*

Then he sent forth a dove, which found no rest to the sole of her foot, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth, i. e. covering its superficies in most places. The dove being a nice and delicate bird, did not choose to perch upon the wet and slimy ground, and therefore returned to the ark to find proper food and a warm roost. Noah would take this as a sign, that the earth was not sufficiently dried for all the creatures to live upon it. *Then he staid yet other seven days, and again sent forth the dove out of the ark.* This shews us, that in the early world time was computed by weeks, owing to the first institution of the sabbath. Then we are told, *the dove came in to him in the evening, to shun the coolness and darkness of the approaching night. And lo! in her mouth was an olive leave pluckt off.* This would rather indicate spring than autumn, as at this season the leaves are tender and full of sap. *Noah staid yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which re-*
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turned not again, finding plenty of food, and many places sufficiently dry, on which to build her nest. From this account of Noah's sending abroad the dove, several times upon the seventh or sabbath day, it appears, that he expected favourable tidings from providence on that day rather than on any other, because it had been set apart from the beginning of the world, for the exercises of religion, and the Almighty had been wont to deliver his oracles to the patriarchs on that day. Tho' Noah might see the face of the earth from the window of the ark, yet he could not so well judge of the condition of remoter parts, without sending abroad these birds; and when he found that they preferred new habitations to their old, he took it for granted, that the time of his own, and of every other creature's deliverance from their long confinement was now at hand. But he would not quit the ark, till he received an order from the same authority, which had commanded him to enter into it; which order he would probably receive the next sabbath day, when

** God spake unto Noah saying. Go forth of the ark, thou and thy wife and thy sons, and thy sons wives with thee. Bring forth every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of*

** Gen. viii. 13, &c.*

cattle,

cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth. Noah himself, but more especially his young family, would be happy to hear of their deliverance from a tedious and irksome confinement, and with the greatest pleasure would once more tread upon the ground. This event happened in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month. If at this period, months consisted only of thirty days, then, Noah was in the ark a year and ten days. If months were lunar, or intercalary days made use of, which is very probable, then, he was in the ark precisely one of our years; going out on the three hundredth and sixty-fifth day, after his entrance into it.

I shall now endeavour to obviate some difficulties, which this subject may suggest to an inquisitive reader.

Some may very naturally inquire, how were Noah and the other creatures supported with food after they came out of the ark? The new earth had arisen from the bottom of the sea, and therefore would remain for a considerable time covered over with slime and mud, and be unfit for vegetation. The history of Moses is too concise, to give answers to such like questions: therefore

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if we want to gratify our curiosity, we must have recourse to the records of nature.

We have already proved it highly probable, that the antient sea abounded with islands; many of which were covered with grass, herbs, and plants long before the deluge happened. These islands, upon the ocean forsaking its former bed, would rise up like towering and lofty mountains; the tops of which, might be inhabited by different animals. For the words of the Almighty plainly indicate, that all the creatures upon earth were not in the ark, when he says, * *Behold I establish my covenant with you, and with every living creature, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.* Here, a distinction is made between the beasts which were in the ark, and those which were upon the earth. There is no doubt then, but God by a special providence, directed the ark to *the mountains of Ararat*, which had been islands in the antient sea, because Noah and all the creatures which had been in the ark, would find abundant provision for themselves, on the fertile tops of these mountains. The dove some time before, had brought to the ark a bud from an olive growing there; and Noah found plenty of vines on Ararat, the juice of which was so rich as to intoxicate

* Gen. ix. 10.

cate him. When the grosser parts of the atmosphere began to subside to the superficies of the new earth and sea, the cold would affect the tops of the mountains, and make many of their former plants languish and die away. Then, men and other animals would gradually descend to the plains, as being better suited to yield them comfort and subsistence; and would, as they proceeded on their march, bring along with them all necessary and useful seeds. Besides, these would be easily transported by the winds, from the heights unto the lower grounds.

But the new earth, besides receiving seeds from the tops of the antient mountains, would be supplied with the germs of fertility and population from another and more plentiful source. When the subterraneous fermentations, shook the pillars of the primitive earth, and made the antient continents disappear, and sink into the abyss, the borders of the grand basin, might be unequally elevated tho' their declivity upon the whole would be gradual and gentle. But when the earth was sinking beneath the waters, great masses of its surface, when disengaged from their denser parts, would float upon the face of the deep. On these slender and temporary islands, seeds, plants, and animals of various kinds, might make a shift to live for a considerable space of time. Moses acquainted

quaints us that *God made a wind to pass over the earth.* This wind, would not only serve to dry up the waters, but together with the motion of the tides, it would disperse over the globe, the immense wrecks of the deluge. Parts of this wreck would be thrown upon the antient islands, (our present mountains) as they arose out of the departing ocean, and other parts of it would be thrown upon the borders of the new continents. Then a sudden vegetation, would take place upon this warm and virgin soil.

The above theory in my opinion, instead of contradicting, establishes the veracity, and corroborates the history of Moses. I am well aware of an objection, which will occur to men of weak and scrupulous minds. Such may consider me as offering violence to the words of the historian, when he uses the phrases, *every one, all, the whole earth*, and such-like expressions, because I do not take them in a strict and absolute sense. I have already endeavoured to soften this objection, but in order to remove it entirely, I shall farther remark, that the language of the Easterns is bold and figurative; and Moses (as it must have naturally happened) wrote in such a stile because it was suited to the age and country in which he lived. When either he, or any other of the sacred writers, describe some awful judgment from God, then

then their style is peculiarly bold, and their narrations peremptory and exaggerated. Thus Moses describes the destruction of the antient Canaanites, in full as strong, if not stronger terms, than he does the destruction of the old world. He says of Sihon, king of the Amorites. * *And the Lord our God delivered him before us, and we smote him and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed all the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city; we left none to remain.* And again of Og king of Bashan, he saith. *So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people, and we smote him, until none was left unto him remaining. And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city.* Now it appears, that none of these peremptory declarations ought to be taken in a strict and limited sense. Because the tribes of Reuben and Gad had this land of Og and Sihon given to them for a possession, and long after the above declaration, they came to Moses, and told him, that they were going to assist their brethren the Israelites, and † *their little ones should dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land.*

* Deut. ii. 33. 34.

† Deut. xxxii. 17.

Whereas, had all these inhabitants been, literally speaking, *utterly destroyed*, there would have been no need of this precaution. Therefore, as the punishment of the antediluvians, and of the Canaanites are described in similar terms, and as it plainly appears, that the last cannot be taken in a strict and absolute sense, what reason can be assigned that we should not put the same construction on the former, and allow that both calamities were general, in so far, as to answer the ends for which they were inflicted. Moses tells us that God intended to destroy the earth, *i. e.* the antediluvian continents. Now, it abundantly verifies the truth of sacred history, that this earth was actually destroyed. Reason and observation bear testimony to the same truth, and the heterogeneous nature of those bodies, which are on the present earth, prove to our very senses, that the former must have been destroyed. An apostle of Christ expresses his belief of such a revolution as has been described, when he says, *By the word of God the Heavens were made of old, and the earth standing in the water and out of the water*, (this is a clear description of the parts of the present earth when they were antediluvian islands) *whereby the world that then was* (which he plainly distinguishes from the present) *being overflowed with water, perished.*

LECTURE XII.

PSALM civ. 30.

Thou renewest the Face of the Earth.

IT is the distinguishing character of the great Jehovah, that *with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*; but, as far as we can learn from reason and revelation, every created being is liable to some kind of change, either for the better or the worse. All the parts of this system are variable, and constantly fluctuating, so that nothing but the incessant energy of divine power, can preserve that beauty, order, and harmony, which he at first, thought fit to impress upon the whole. Sacred history informs us of all the revolutions, which this globe has undergone, in which we are materially concerned. The last was general and violent, and left behind it, many memorials of the effects which it produced. Of these, I shall consider the most eminent, both in the natural and moral world.

Upon an impartial review, it will appear, that the temporary evils of this life are so conducted

by providence, as to be productive of future benefits ; of which we have a striking example in the flood of Noah. At this period the earth might be overstocked with inhabitants, therefore it was necessary, that one whole generation, (a few excepted) should be removed, to give scope for succeeding generations to act their parts on the stage of human life, till the predetermined number should be completed. The new formed earth, would doubtless be as well fitted as the old for the condition of its inhabitants. In my opinion, the soil was more fertile, and the temperature of the air more gentle and uniform before the deluge than afterwards, and thus better calculated to promote greater longevity and bodily stature. For skeletons found in different parts of the globe, which are evidently antediluvian, as being imbedded in marine substances, prove that men and animals were formerly of superior magnitude to any which now exist. We can hardly imagine any other reason for a grant of animal food being made to Noah, after the flood, but to supply the deficiency of the earth in yielding strength and nourishment to man. Our Saviour says, * *It was in the days of Noe, as it was in the days of Lot. They bought ; they sold ; they planted ; they builded ;*

* Luke xvii, 26.

they married wives, and were given in marriage, until the day that the flood came, and destroyed them all. These facts bespeak great fullness and plenty, and as the land where Lot dwelt, was so fertile as to be compared to the garden of the Lord, we may therefore conclude that the earth in the days of Noah was fertile also.

In the old world after the first *curse* had been inflicted upon it, there were no volcanos nor subterraneous eruptions of fire, but what proceeded from the bottom of the sea. Had such phenomena taken place upon the continents, the interior fires would have in some measure spent themselves, so that the dry land would not have been excavated, and undermined to such an amazing degree, as to make the whole at last sink down into the abyss. The present earth, is so full of fissures and chimneys, through which subterraneous fire may ascend, that the expansive vapours having a constant vent, render it impossible for a second universal deluge to take place, in any future age, from the same causes. And perhaps the great quantity of effluvia, arising from the melted fossils and minerals, has produced such a change in the atmosphere, that the dews and rains descending from it, by altering the juices of herbs and plants, may have weakened the nutritious quality of the whole,

whole, and rendered many of them deleterious to man and beast.

The superficies of the present earth must be widely different, from what it was in its primeval condition. We find great tracts of the globe occupied with barren rocks, and chains of lofty mountains, unfit to yield sustenance to man. There are vast and extensive deserts*, where animal life can scarcely exist; with many lakes and marshes, consisting of millions of acres. All these owe their origin to the deluge, which left in all parts of the earth, marks of the divine displeasure, and are lasting memorials to future ages, of what sinners ought to fear from the judgments of a righteous God.

An ingenious inquirer into the works of nature, meets with many phenomena on this globe, to perpetuate the memory of the deluge, and to excite his wonder and astonishment. But no objects are more striking, than such as are placed above the human eye, and terminate our sight, I mean those lofty mountains, the date of whose origin eludes the researches of the ablest antiquarian.

* In those vast wildernesses, (the deserts of Lybia) there is neither to be found, bird, nor wild beast, nor herbs, nor so much as a fly. And nothing to be seen, but mountains of sand, and the carcases and bones of camels.

Poncet's Journey from Grand Cairo to Ethiopia.

These

These mountains may be divided into three classes.

1. Such as have no mixture of marine substances. I have already observed, that these mountains seem to be the oldest of any, because they were probably raised before the living productions of the sea were numerous. The 2d class of mountains, may be termed volcanic. The number of extinguished volcanos upon the face of the earth is immensely great. Many of their craters remain visible to the human eye*, and there are few countries where one may not find strata of genuine lava, under some form or other, either in the bowels of mountains or at different depths below the surface of the earth. Another phenomenon, in my opinion, proves the great number of volcanos which have been active in some former period, viz. the quantities of large stones lying in a detached manner on the surface of the ground, at a great distance from declivities and quarries of the same kind, for it is evident that these masses could not have been petrified in their present position, but must have been ejected by subterraneous eruptions. The present volcanos, produce the same phenomena. * In the year 1631, a huge stone was thrown twelve miles from the crater of Mount Vesuvius, and fell on a nobleman's house, which

* Deep lakes and fathomless ponds on the tops of mountains, and in other places, are nothing but the craters of volcanos.

† See Sir Wm. Hamilton on volcanos.

it

it set on fire. And in the year 1767, the same volcano ejected a stone to a considerable distance, twelve feet high, and forty-five feet in diameter. 3. There are other mountains consisting of little else besides calcareous matter*, such as limestone and chalk. The whole of these substances, are animal exuviae, and have been produced from the shells and substances of fishes and other inhabitants of the sea. It may appear wonderful, and to many scarcely credible, that shell fish, such as oysters, cockles, &c. should be collected to such an amazing degree, as to form large mountains in the bottom of the sea, and to cover a large tract, so as to be many thousand yards deep. The whole works of God are wonderful, but the above fact, will no longer raise our admiration, when we reflect that in the Pacific Ocean, there are rocks, yea islands of coral, raised from the bottom of the fathomless deep, many yards above its surface. And it is now agreed that these masses are formed by insects†, so small as not to be visible to the

* In the northern parts of Lancashire, Westmorland, and Yorkshire, there are large mountains of pure limestone, and many acres of ground covered with strata of the same stone, lying in a horizontal position, and sometimes elevated a few feet above the adjoining surface. Sea shells are often found in and upon this calcareous substance, which still retain their natural shape.

† That coral is an animal substance, is proved by the action of fire, which reduces it to an alkaline earth, or quicklime.

naked

naked eye. What an inconceivable number of these animalcula must be accumulated, and united together to form these singular and extraordinary productions of nature*? The hardest and most solid calcareous substances, whether limestone, marble or flint, have been once in a soft and pulpy state, because we almost every where find on the naked surface of limestone rocks, numerous, large, and irregular clefts and fissures, as well as grooves and furrows†. These clefts have evidently been formed, when the surface of this pulpy mass became hard and dry by the influence of the sun and air; and the furrows have no doubt been occasioned by rain falling and forming small streams of water, before the surface assumed a stony hardness.

By what natural cause, petrefactions first began, is hard to say. When subterraneous fire was breaking forth in all parts of the antient sea, its eruptions would sometimes carry along with them huge streams of melted minerals and fossils, what we commonly call lava. At other times, when the fire did not lie so deep, it might issue forth in a

* Capt. Cook found many of these coral islands in various degrees of growth. Some a little below the surface of the sea, and some just emerging above it. See Cook's Voyage, Vol. I. ch. 3.

† These clefts and furrows are very conspicuous on all the limestone rocks, in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Westmorland, which are some hundred miles in circumference.

purser state, and calcine the lower deposits of the ocean, particularly the shells and coverings of different fishes. This might give rise to the work of petrefaction, which is generally agreed to be owing to the filtration of water, saturated with an impalpable calcareous substance. However, the wrecks of the old sea, have been found of great utility to the present earth. The advantages of lime are well known, and likewise of marl, which is nothing but a mixture of calcareous substances with clay and sand.

Another phenomenon, has occasioned much speculation among naturalists. Skeletons of animals have been found in various parts of the globe, whose species, either now have no existence, or can only live in very different climates from those in which they have been discovered. The whole of these in my opinion, are antediluvian, because they are generally found in the midst of marine substances. Before the deluge, when subterraneous eruptions were so frequent in the ocean, there would be many and tremendous earthquakes. These never fail to agitate the waters of the sea, to raise them above their wonted level, and to drown large tracts of land. Such inundations, as far as they extended, would sweep away animals of every kind, and many productions of the soil. The motion of the tides would keep the
bodies

bodies of these creatures continually rolling along, till they reached the deeper parts of the sea, where the waters were more stagnant. There the most bulky and ponderous would subside, and afterwards remain, because their weight would counteract the motion of the circumambient water. When at the deluge, the antient sea was drained, the deeper and more hollow parts of it, would appear like so many lakes, and would contain a large quantity of water, for a considerable period of time. These lakes would at first be covered with lighter wreck, and for many years after, their surfaces would be accumulating such materials, as could most easily be transported by storms and winds. When these were saturated with water, they would sink down and form a new deposit at the bottom. In process of time, evaporation and other causes would drain off the greatest part of the water of these lakes, till at last they were converted into bogs, fens, and marshes. This accounts for the skeletons of antediluvian animals being often found in such places, under strata of ferns, rushes, mossy ground, &c. I have already remarked that some species of animals were extinguished at the deluge, and particularly of the larger kind. There is one of these called the mammoth, which according to an estimate,

made from the parts of its skeleton, mentioned in a former note*, appears to have been too enormous to have subsisted on the present earth. It is clear from many instances, that animals and plants have lived before the flood, in parts of the earth, adjoining to our continents on which at present they could not subsist. This may be accounted for, by a change in the temperature of the air. For the face and situation of our continents, regulate the degrees of heat and cold, more than the distance from the equator or the poles.

Since the deluge, there have been many and great changes†, made upon the face of our earth by earthquakes, inundations, and such like occurrences in the kingdom of nature. The land has sometimes been turned into sea, and the sea has been turned into land again.

I shall now consider the moral consequences of the deluge, *i. e.* how far it affected the character and condition of mankind in general. All the dispensations of providence seem to concur in one great end, and that end is happiness: and as man is the chief of the divine workmanship in this world, therefore it is reasonable to conclude, that the most eminent parts of the divine administration respect him as their primary object, if not

* Page 298.

† See Whitehurst. Ch. 9 & 10.

as their final cause. It is therefore highly probable that the great revolution which we have been endeavouring to review, was conducive to the happiness of mankind, in its truest and completest sense. Vice and immorality are inseparably connected with misery and ruin. Therefore to counteract the prevalence of the first, is an effectual means of preventing the last. It is a truth which wants no arguments to support it, that human nature in its best estate is frail, and that no man ever lived, (excepting that illustrious character, styled by way of eminence *the son of man*) but who upon being tempted did fall into sin. Therefore if the deluge lessened temptation, and removed from the world many incitements to vice, it argues this great event, to be an effect of the divine benevolence, as well as of omnipotent power. To that generation of men who were cut off, it may be considered an awful judgment, but at the same time mixed with mercy; for as they were incorrigible, allowing them longer to abuse the blessings of life, was only allowing them to sink deeper into misery, and feel the severer effects of aggravated guilt. As to those who succeeded them, the memorials of this catastrophe, and the very remains of the ark itself, would serve as affecting examples of the power and justice of Almighty God, and could not fail to convince them of his

abhor-

abhorrence of vice, and of his determination to punish it. In the words of a great divine*, ‘ The
‘ evident design of the deluge was to lessen the
‘ quantity of vice and prophaneness, and to pre-
‘ serve and advance religion in the earth, the great
‘ end, for which man and it were created. This
‘ end it was well adapted to obtain, in the then
‘ present state of things, and in all future gene-
‘ rations. In the present state of things it prevent-
‘ ed a total corruption. For if the whole tainted
‘ part had not been cut off, a single family would
‘ have been soon drawn in, or destroyed; and
‘ then the whole globe must have been ruined,
‘ and the schemes and purposes of God from the
‘ beginning of the world had been defeated. But
‘ by reserving a select family, for the continua-
‘ tion of the human species, the system of the
‘ divine counsels were preserved entire; and the most
‘ proper methods was devised for the establishment of
‘ religion and virtue in the new world; as the
‘ family of Noah enjoyed much greater advan-
‘ tages for this end, than the family of Adam at
‘ the beginning of things.’ For they had been
witnesses of this grand revolution, whereas Adam
had only the account of it from another. This
view therefore of the ruin and repair of the system

* Taylor’s Scrip. Div. Ch. 18.

of the natural world, would give them the strongest impressions of a God, and carry conviction into their minds that none but the great architect, who built this wondrous fabric, could thus put it out of order, and almost take it to pieces, and then restore it again to its former symmetry and proportion*.

The luxuriant productions of the first earth served only to excite and foment the lusts of man, and minister fuel to his vices and luxury; as has been the case ever since. Upon the supposition then, that the earth after the flood was not so fertile as formerly, (which in my opinion is highly probable) it was a merciful dispensation, to cut off such occasion of sin and wickedness, and oblige men to employ their time and labour in earning their necessary subsistence, which the earth by diligent culture will still afford. It is a well known fact, that idleness joined with great health and *fullness of bread* generates much vice, whereas labour and industry prevent men from falling into many fatal temptations.

Another constitution of providence which took place after the deluge, and had a tendency to check the carnality of men, was shortening the period of human life. Some have assigned natural

* Winder.

causes for this change. Such as the constitution of Noah, but especially the younger part of his family, being impaired by their long continuance in the ark; or, the alteration made in the fruits of the earth, by subterraneous and unwholesome steams and exhalations. But I would remark, that many events which happened at the creation and deluge, and for a considerable time after, seem to be of a mixed nature, partly natural and partly supernatural. So that when we deduce certain effects from their natural causes, and argue from some causes to certain effects, which we cannot account for by natural means, there, religion ought to interpose, in prevailing on us to acknowledge the supernatural interposition of divine power*.[†] But, if any natural cause occurred at the deluge to shorten human life, its effect, one would think, should have been more evident, whilst the cause was fresh, and operated in the strongest manner. Whereas, this change in the life of man was introduced in a gradual and progressive manner, and therefore must be imputed to a positive appointment of God. ‘† Sin brought death in
‘ first, and yet man lived almost one thousand
‘ years. But he sinned more, and then death
‘ came nearer to him : for when all the world was

* Clayton.

† Taylor’s Life of Christ.

‘ drowned

drowned in wickedness, and then in water, God cut him short by one half, and five hundred years was his ordinary period: But man sinned still, and had strange imaginations; and built towers in the air: and then about Peleg's time, God cut him shorter by one half yet; two hundred and odd years was his determination. And yet the generations of the world returned not unanimously to God, and God cut him off another half yet, and reduced him to one hundred and twenty. But if God had gone on still in the same method, and shortened our days as we multiplied our sins, we should have only been like the shortest lived fly. But God seeing *man's thoughts were only evil continually*, he was resolved, *no longer to strive with him*, nor destroy the kind, but punish individuals only and single persons: and whether they sinned or obeyed; their lives should regularly be proportionable. When therefore death was at too great a distance; and the length of life made men forget their dependence on their Creator, and the frailty of their nature, it pleased God after the deluge to vary this dispensation, by shortening their days, and gradually reducing them to threescore and ten, or fourscore years. And thus, death being brought nearer to our view, and rendered more incertain as to its approach, became a powerful motive with us to regard less

the things of a transitory world, and to attend more to the rules of piety and wisdom.

But farther, mankind reaped great advantage from the new degrees of light, which were thrown into the world by that constitution which was erected under Noah. The covenant made with him, dispelled their fears and excited their hopes, for every part of it was calculated to animate them to the practice of their duty, by maintaining a constant dependence upon God, and bearing in their minds an habitual sense of the awful consequences of incurring his displeasure.

I shall now conclude this subject, by endeavouring to remove an objection¹ against the veracity of Moses, with respect to the antiquity of the present habitable earth. Some learned men undertake to prove, that it is many thousand years older than what sacred history makes it. And they reason in this manner. In pits, and several openings of the ground in the neighbourhood of volcanos, particularly of Mount Etna, beds of lava are found covered over to a certain depth with vegetable soil. From different calculations that have been made of the quantity of vegetable soil, that has been formed on some lavas, the date of whose eruptions are recorded in history, it appears that no less time than one thousand years would be necessary to form one of these vegetable coverings. Now;

as ten or twelve strata of such lava have been found, lying above one another, with such intermediate layers of soil betwixt them, it is argued that the world must be ten or twelve thousand years old. But in answer to this, some lavas are smooth and solid, and counteract the first principles of vegetation much longer than others, which are of a more friable and porous kind. Besides eruptions of volcanos, are often accompanied with vast quantities of ashes and muddy water; as if nature had intended quickly to repair the barrenness which it had occasioned. When these last effects take place, seeds carried by the wind, easily find a nidus or shelter on the rough surface of such lavas, and soon accumulate vegetable soil. The town of Herculaneum was destroyed by an eruption in the 97 year of the Christian æra. Five times since, it has been covered with lava, and between each of these strata is a bed of vegetable mould. If all these events have happened within the space of seventeen hundred years, it appears that less than three hundred years was sufficient to produce each. The new mountain which was raised by subterraneous fire in the year 1538, has its very crater or mouth now covered over with shrubs. Every earthquake, occasioned by volcanos is nothing but an effort of burning matter and fiery steams to enlarge the boundaries, by which they are confined.

If then, the expansive force is so great that it cannot be confined within subterraneous caverns, an eruption above the surface must ensue, but when the incumbent pressure prevents this effect, * the lava may run laterally below the ground, and fill up all the cavities and fissures which lie in its direction. Therefore it is not improbable that beds of lava, may be found at great depths, tho' they were never above the surface. And it may be added that earthquakes, which are frequent in the neighbourhood of volcanos often sink large tracts of land to great depths. But the present earth bears on its surface many evident marks of its being only of a recent formation, when compared with that antiquity which many are apt to ascribe to it. It is well known, that the soil increases by decayed vegetables, and by the sediment deposited upon it, from dews, rains, and snow. The thickness or thinness of the soil indicates a greater or less time of accumulation. Now it appears from observations which have been made in many parts of the globe, that where the surface of the earth is composed of the same materials, and situation and climate agree, the thickness of vegetable soil is the same. But at this day it has not acquired such a degree of growth, that from any calculations

* See Whitehurst's ingenious observations on the strata in Derbyshire.

which

which we can make, we should compute its origin farther back than the deluge under Noah, according to the Mosaic account.

Another argument against the remote antiquity of this earth may be drawn from the increase of cold and snow. I have already remarked, that the tops of the antediluvian mountains or islands being little raised above the level of the sea would make them remarkably fertile, and the very tops of the mountains of Ararat, would afford Noah and every other creature when they left the ark abundance of provision; but then upon the antient sea leaving its former bed, these eminences would be elevated to such a height in the atmosphere, that the thinness and rarity of the air, would generate cold and frost. Then the vegetation on the tops of mountains would begin to languish, so that man and other creatures, would gradually descend into the plains. And in the words of the Psalmist*, *as deep calleth unto deep at the noise of the water spouts*, so cold attracts cold, and frost and snow have a natural tendency to increase their quantity. But it is a fact established upon the most accurate observations, that cold ever has been increasing, and probably ever will increase on this globe. In the last century, there were roads over different parts of

* Ps. xlii. 7.

the Alps*, which have many years past been rendered impassible, by deep beds of snow which lie incruusted on them. Therefore if this earth had been as old as many compute it to be, the greatest part of it would have been bound up with continued frost, and become uninhabitable for man and beast. But that wise and benevolent being, † *who hath made mankind to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation*, hath made abundant provision against this growing evil. For, so long as this globe will last there will be sufficient room for all the inhabitants which will appear upon it. The equatorial or hotter parts are but thinly inhabited; but, when the excess of heat is tempered by the approach of cold, the scorching and barren wilderness may be converted into a fertile and luxuriant soil.

But there are many strong and rational arguments, which make it highly probable, that the present frame and constitution of the earth, has been of no very antient date. ‡ The changes which must naturally fall out in the earth in a vast length of time, by petrification, the sinking and washing down of mountains, and innumerable other acci-

* Particularly between Geneva and Turin. See Mons. de Luc. Vol. 6.

† Acts xvii. 26.

‡ Ancient Universal History, Introduction.

dents; the universal tradition of nations, both learned and barbarous; the late origin and invention of useful arts and sciences; the shortness of the history of the world, which reaches backward but to a few ages; the manifest absurdities and contradictions of those few accounts, which pretend to a greater antiquity; the impossibility that deluges or other accidents, should have destroyed the greatest part of mankind, and buried in oblivion all former transactions, and yet never have made a complete and universal destruction. These, and many more arguments, drawn from nature, reason, and observation, prove that this earth is of no greater antiquity than what appears from the Mosaic account of it.

Having now finished the task which I proposed to myself, and reviewed the oldest and most memorable period of sacred history, I shall conclude with the following reflection. *The Lord, by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the Heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; and in wisdom hast thou made them all!*











